

MODERN ISLAM IN INDIA

A Social Analysis

Wilfred Cantwell Smith



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Preface

This book is the study of a people, passing through a turbulent period: the Muslim community in India, during the past seventy-five years or so, to the present day. In the nineteenth century, that people was backward and somnolent, with traditions of past grandeur; to-day parts of it, at least, are much awake. . . . We in the West have gone through transformation enough in the same period; but this group started from feudalism, and in a superficial sense its modernised minority has in a few decades lived through the stages of social development through which Europe took almost as many centuries to go.

A young Muslim, fashionably dressed, sits with his friends in the Lahore Coffee House and talks, in English, of Marx or tennis. He has perhaps never studied the Qur'an. Yet he is intensely conscious of being a Muslim, he insists that he and his coreligionists in India are a nation, and he is, he says, ready to fight to establish for them a free country. His philosophy and way of life have much in common with those of many young men today in, say, London. His grandfather, or great-grandfather, on the other hand, probably thought and lived rather more similarly to the grandfathers of the men who made our Renaissance and our Reformation.

How did this development take place? How did Islam, recently the religion of a mediaeval community, become the religion of capitalists, liberals, implacable nationalists, and of socialist dreamers? In what ways have Indian Muslims struggled and organised in endeavouring to pursue their changing goals? And what are the ideas and categories of thought, the aspirations and frustrations, of the modern Muslims of this sorrowful land?

An answer to questions such as these is here attempted. Part I of the book deals with the ideological issues—a minor “Religion and the Rise of Capitalism,” as it were for Indian Islam. Part II is concerned with politics: it describes and analyses the movements that have surged and are surging. Particular space here is devoted to Communalism and to the Muslim League. The former is that explosive Hindu-Muslim rivalry that one day may be but a thin excuse for imperial oppression and another day may be the cause of civil war. The Muslim League, with its cry for Pakistan, is to-day in the forefront of the political scene.

This study, then, is offered in the hope that it may prove some contribution to the sociology of religion. Also, to a political and social understanding of one important segment of this modern world. The future of India in the world is problematic; the future of the Muslims in India is problematic. That both problems deserve attention, men of goodwill will hardly deny.

To write history without assumption is nowadays recognised as neither possible nor interesting. This present book is definitely written from a point of view. I am a socialist with pronounced ethical convictions; and I believe in the scientific method. In the section “Definition of Terms,” I have stated as clearly as I know how the main conscious assumptions from which I start.

W.C. SMITH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FROM THE PREFACE TO THE 1946 EDITION	iii
--	-----

Part I

INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
------------------------	---

1. THE MOVEMENT IN FAVOUR OF CONTEMPORARY

BRITISH CULTURE	7
Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān	8
The Aligarh School	26
<i>A Note on the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College</i> <i>(Muslim University), Aligarh</i>	45
<i>A Note on the Part Played by Christian Missions in</i> <i>Islamic Reform</i>	47

2. THE MOVEMENT IN FAVOUR OF ISLAMIC CULTURE OF

THE PAST	49
Amīr 'Alī	51
Descriptive Analysis of the Movement	59
Later Developments of the Movement	92
<i>A Note on 'Uthmānīyah University</i>	110

3. THE MOVEMENT IN FAVOUR OF A NEW CULTURE OF

THE FUTURE : PROGRESSIVE	113
Iqbāl the Progressive	116
Iqbāl's Progressive Followers and Other Modern	
Muslim Progressives	135
<i>A Note on the Jāmi'ah Milliyyah Islāmīyah</i>	150

4. THE MOVEMENT IN FAVOUR OF A NEW CULTURE OF THE FUTURE : REACTIONARY	155
Iqbāl the Reactionary	155
Iqbāl's Reactionary Followers and Other Modern Muslim Reactionaries	166
<i>A Note on Recent Developments at the Muslim University, Aligarh</i>	180
5. THE CONTEMPORARY SYNTHESIS	183

*Part II**POLITICAL MOVEMENTS*

1. AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON COMMUNALISM	187
2. THE PAN-ISLAMIC, KHILAFAT, AND RELATED MOVE- MENTS	233
3. ISLAM AND INDIAN NATIONALISM	250
Muslims and the Indian National Congress	251
Pro-Nationalist Muslim Groups :	
Khudā'ī Khidmatgār	265
The Ahrār Party	270
The Mu'min and Similar Groups	275
Other Political Groupings	276
The Āzād Muslim Conference	278
The Muslim Majlis	280
4. ISLAMIC NATIONALISM : THE KHAKSAR MOVEMENT	283
5. ISLAMIC NATIONALISM : THE MUSLIM LEAGUE	297
The Conservative Phase : 1906-36	297
The Reactionary Phase : 1936-42	300
The Most Recent Phase : 1942 ff.	327
SKETCH MAP OF INDIA, illustrating the Pakistan demand	346

Part III

SOME ORGANISED THEOLOGICAL GROUPS

THE CLASSICAL THEOLOGIANS	36
A NOTE ON THE AHMADIYAH MOVEMENT	36
THE SHI'AH	37
DEFINITION OF TERMS	37
INDEX	38

Part I

INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENTS

Introduction

- 1. In Favour of Contemporary British Culture**
- 2. In Favour of Islamic Culture of the Past**
- 3. In Favour of a New Culture of the Future : Progressive**
- 4. In Favour of a New Culture of the Future : Reactionary**
- 5. The Contemporary Synthesis**

INTRODUCTION

The Young Indian Muslims of to-day, living new lives, think different thoughts from those of their fathers and grandfathers years before them. And the latter's lives and thoughts were different also from those of *their* grandfathers fifty years still earlier. The history of ideas in Indian Islam during the period of British rule in India presents half-a-dozen principal new aspects—each corresponding to a major new development in the social environment. Two have been reactions, at some points violent, against those new developments. The others have been successive phases of the constructive adaptation of Islam to the social process.

The first, reactionary, movement does not fall within the scope of our study. It began in the early nineteenth century, flourished fully only among the lower classes, and was a protest, vehement and well-organised but without a constructive programme, against the exceedingly low level to which society had been reduced. The movement is often called "Wahhābī" (after the contemporary Islamic reform movement of that name in Arabia). But it was spontaneous and indigenous; though the leaders soon came in touch with the Arabian parallel, and appreciated the similarities. It is the culmination of the first main period into which the economic history of modern India may be divided: that of merchant capitalism, from the beginning of East India Company rule on into the early nineteenth century, when the political chaos and the overseas traders drained India of her wealth and gradually reduced her to a land of incredible prostration. Culture withered, and religion, as always in a moribund society, became hopelessly corrupt. The "Wahhābī"¹ protest began as an attack on the religious corrup-

1. Because the Arabian name "Wahhābī" is used only metaphorically for the Indian movement, it has been enclosed throughout the present work in quotation marks.

For a slightly fuller treatment of the class nature of this movement, cf. Chap. I of Part II of the present work; and see Hunter, *The Indian Muslims*.

tion, taking the form of a puritanical rejection of all accretions to and all declensions from the "pure" Islam, with a desired return to the simplicity of faith (and society) of the Prophet's Arabia. Before long, the movement became increasingly political and social, was turned against the "infidel" rulers of the various states, and was accompanied by furious risings of the peasants against their landlords—whether infidel or not. In the north, it was accompanied also by furious attacks on the new machines and their owners, by distraught handicraftsmen facing increasing unemployment. Having become such a peasants' and workers' movement, it was suppressed with the usual vigour. But it continued to smoulder; and its impetus was used by the old conservative forces in the "Mutiny," their last bid for power and for a rehabilitation of the society which had given them status.

The second phase of British imperialism in India was the nineteenth-century period, or British industrial capitalism, during which Great Britain was selling the goods that she was manufacturing after her Industrial Revolution; India became predominantly a market. This phase produced in India a new, middle, class, and was accompanied by the infiltration of British liberal culture. The class of men that developed, first clerks in the bureaucracy and then small traders, small bourgeois on the outskirts of the new exploitation and rising to considerable status as administrators, merchants and professionals, were dependent on British imperialism for their function, and were themselves without religious forms and ideologies suited to them. The first major development in Islamic modernism, therefore, and the point at which we begin our study, was the working out of a liberal Islam compatible with the nineteenth-century West, similar to it in general outlook, and, especially, in harmony with its science, its business method, and its humanitarianism. This was done by separating out principles from the letter of the law, and attending to them only, disengaging the religion from its feudal manifestations and especially (here paralleling the "Wahhābīs") from the corruptions of the recent decadence; repudiating from Islam, as later accretions or misinterpretations, all that prohibited or ran counter to Western bourgeois principles; and stressing the while

the similarity of the fundamentals of all religions, specifically Islam and Christianity. Above all, there was a change of attitude; a this-worldly dynamic approach that was new. The outstanding figure in connection with this movement is Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān with liberal Aligarh School in the latter part of last century.

The next phase of Islamic modernism came later, when the Indian bourgeoisie was advancing, developing its own strength and an independence. British imperialism had, from the late nineteenth century, entered a new phase of finance capital, in which an Indian industrialism, however petty, was brought into being—and with it an Indian middle class becoming less dependent on and more a rival to the British bourgeoisie. Now there was elaborated an Islam not only compatible with but considered to be the very source of Western liberalism, and Christianity was painted as definitely a rival and an inferior religion. This was accompanied by a burst of enthusiasm for the glory of Islamic culture in the past, and particularly the brilliant 'Abbāsi age—the flowering of Arab culture at Baghdad. From this culture modern science and civilisation were now said to be derived. There is no one outstanding writer representing this attitude; the best known in the West is Amīr 'Alī, for its early stage; the point of view has been developed much further since by a host of less prominent men.

The recent progressive phase of Islamic modernism (as also its supersessor, the recent reactionary phase) has appealed to those who look to the future rather than to either the present or the past. It has reflected the growing frustration of even the Indian bourgeoisie, and has belonged to that class of young men for whom capitalism, not expanding fast enough, has no room, to whom it offers no opportunity. They have been looking therefore to abolishing the present society and building a new one nearer their desires. This movement has repudiated not only the West, as did the preceding one, but also Westernism itself; instead of claiming liberalism as its own, as Islamic, it supersedes liberalism with a new and creative vision. Its pride is no longer in the 'Abbāsi culture of the Muslims, for that was too "imperialistic". Rather it has stressed the very early period of

Islam (*Khilāfat al-Rāshidah*), the last ten years of the Prophet Muḥammad's lifetime and the first thirty years after his death; it dubs all subsequent Islamic history an aberration. Fatalism, proper to feudal society, and neglected in the bourgeois, is here ardently replaced by its opposite, enthusiasm and creative enterprise.

The progressive phase has been neither widespread nor lasting. It soon began to peter out ; to give way to the more recent phase of religious modernism, energetic reaction. The transition from the progressive to the reactionary trend has been smooth; to those involved in it, almost unnoticeable. (And the question has lately arisen whether that transition is reversible, whether those involved may again move forward to create a new world.) The outstanding figure in both movements is Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl. At the level of the idea, the two movements have been in many respects of one attitude. For both ideologies have had the same constituency: the frustrated middle class. For a short time that class flirted with progressive notions. But as the social crisis became acute, and the revolutionary implications of progress appeared, the class betook itself to frightened reaction ; and the progressive religious movement was transformed into its opposite, communal fanaticism.

Latterly, however, the Muslim bourgeoisie, expanding in the Second World War, has discovered that it may again move forward on its own : in a separatist movement designed to establish the Muslim middle class as the rulers in a sovereign Indian Muslim state. With this new vision, modern Indian Islam has again turned to progressive ideas, although at the time of writing it has not reached progress in action.

The present study is a consideration of their developments in modernised Indian Islam.

Chapter One

THE MOVEMENT IN FAVOUR OF CONTEMPORARY BRITISH CULTURE

The first effective impingement on Islamic studies of British culture showed itself in a Delhi "Urdu revival" in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, where an enthusiastic and able group set themselves to reproducing in the vernacular the science and learning of the West, and in so doing attained also something of the liberal spirit. Religiously, a slight trend towards Christianity was evident, but none towards irreligion. This whole move came to an abrupt and complete end with the Mutiny, and the individuals who had taken part in it were in considerable danger of doing likewise.

Already in Calcutta, the centre of British economic and cultural radiation, there was a good deal of liberal thought, European learning, and religious discussion. But in so far as specific results of this showed themselves in the religious field, they either were agnostic, or were Hindu—that is, of the dominant middle-class community. Then in 1863 a "Muhammadan Literary Society" was founded, by a titled aristocrat, Nawwāb 'Abd al-Laṭīf. In it, middle and upper-class Muslims of the city gathered, and discussed political, social, and religious questions, increasingly in the light of English ideas and standards, and with increasing respect for European learning. The founder and secretary was active in his endeavours to bring to Muslims the advantages which could be had from association with British culture and with the British economic and political regime. He was convinced that British rule was too powerful to be resisted, and too useful to be ignored; the Muslim who wanted to "get ahead" should align himself with it, and share in the opportunities which it was opening up to an indigenous middle class. Culturally, through this movement, with Nawwāb 'Abd al-Laṭīf as the moving figure, the study of English language and literature

was introduced to Hastings's Calcutta Madrasah, new colleges in other centres through Bengal were started, and well-to-do people were found willing to subscribe funds to help pay Muslim students' fees. Politically, the movement distinguished itself by being thoroughly and even theologically pro-British. It opposed the extensive and formidable, though now waning, lower-class "Wahhābi" agitation against the British infidels. This agitation called itself a holy war (*jihād*) and severely condemned non-participants as traitors to Islam. The Muhammadan Literary Society enlisted the pronouncements of outstanding Muslim divines, stating that conditions in India called for no holy war. The society gained the gratitude of both the British government and the well-to-do Muslims by promulgating this decision and a corollary loyalty.¹ The class of men here represented was necessarily loyal to the British to whom they owed their existence. Their religion, if it was to mean anything to them, must be consonant with this position. Not that their religion did, by any means, mean any more to them than some other considerations. "If any language in India could lead to *the advancement in life* of the learner, it is the English. . . . The Mohammedan who has been educated in English . . . knows that *the safety of life and property* depends upon the stability of the British rule . . ."² The words are Nawwāb 'Abd al-Laṭīf's, the italics are ours and draw attention to the typically bourgeois attitude.

Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān

While noting these earlier and contemporary moves in a similar direction, we pass on to consider by far the most important and famous figure of this trend, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān.

1. See their pamphlet: *Abstract of Proceedings of the Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta, on Wednesday 23 November 1870. Being a lecture by Maulavi Karamat Ali of Jaunpur . . . Calcutta, 1871.* This reference is from Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, p. 120, footnote. An extract is given as Appendix III, p. 215, *ibid*.

2. "'A Minute of the Hooghly Mudrussah,' written at the request of the Hon. Sir J. P. Grant, K.C.B., Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, by Moulvi Abdul Luteef Khan Bahadur, Calcutta, 1877, p. 3"; quoted in Vambery, *Western Culture in Eastern Lands*, p. 190.

It was he around whom the entire movement gathered, as it grew from small and much opposed beginnings to permeate the whole of the growing Indian Muslim middle-class life. Sir Sayyid was a strong man of initiative and of perseverance : he succeeded because, when he saw something that he felt needed to be done, he set about doing it and kept undeterredly at it until it was done. But he succeeded also because others too felt that it needed to be done , there was a growing demand for the contribution he was making, a growing audience glad to listen to him. This audience was the incipient Muslim bourgeoisie, created by and developing under the bureaucratic and industrial imperialism of the British, as it more and more reached the northern, Muslim, parts of India.

Sayyid Ahmad (1817-98) was born of a well-placed family of Delhi which on both sides had long and notable Mughal-government connections. As a child he had a chance to observe the moribund Mughal court. His education was entirely in the old traditional manner. He decided, against the wishes of his family, to enter British service, and did so at the age of twenty-one.

From this point until the Mutiny (1857), his only activity of note was literary ; he wrote copiously. He produced treatises of very mediaeval science, which show that he had not yet come under the influence of modern European culture ; several theological tracts, which show his interest in religion, and in its reform and purification somewhat along "Wahhābī" lines ; and some historical works, evincing an interest in the happier days when Islamic civilisation in India was flourishing.

Came the Mutiny. He opposed it, and helped the British, whose regime, he was convinced, had come to stay. He was extremely disturbed by the Mutiny and the following years, when the Muslim community, already backward, was bitterly repressed by the government, and was bitterly sullen, antagonistic. He is said even to have considered migrating to Egypt, so keenly did he feel the decadence of the Indian Muslims. Instead, he determined to remain and to help raise that community. This was to be accomplished by weaning it from its policy of opposition, to one of acquiescence and participation, and by weaning the

government from its policy of suppression to one of paternalism. From the Mutiny to his trip to England (1869) is a period in which he devoted himself to bringing about a political *rapprochement* between rulers and ruled. From the former's minds he wanted to erase the conviction that the Muslims were primarily responsible for the Mutiny, that they were essentially and by religion disloyal; from the latter's to erase the ignorance which alone, he thought, could lead to such a colossal blunder as anti-Britishness.

Accordingly, on the one hand he zealously endeavoured to prove to the rulers the basic fidelity of the Muslim community. In an Urdu booklet on the causes of the Indian Mutiny³ published in 1859, he made the point that if Muslims err, it was only by fond absurdity, and they could easily be won back by a little governmental tact; in *The Loyal Muhammadans of India*, 1860-1, he displayed those Muslim gentry who had sided with the foreigner in the Mutiny. He was throughout his life quick to answer any charge that Islam was essentially an advocate of independence. On the other hand, for his fellow countrymen, in addition to his direct pro-British propaganda, he founded schools in the various towns to which he was posted; he founded a translation society to supply for these schools, and for the Urdu-reading public generally, books from the Western Arts and Sciences that would be "useful"—and so on, that the people might learn to leave their folly and to appreciate both the power and the benefits of British rule.⁴

In the field of religion he undertook to show the basic similarity of Islam and Christianity, and hence to advocate a reconci-

3. *Asbāb i Baghāwat i Hind*, 1859; appeared later in English as *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, 1873, translated by Sir Auckland Colvin and G.F.I. Graham.

4. In his speech at the opening of the Translation Society, Ghazipur, 1864, he spoke of the need of studying history, so as not to blunder as at the Mutiny; science, so as to increase agricultural production; and political economy, so that the natives might "know that the revenue is collected for their own benefit, and not for that of Government." The speech is given in Graham, *Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan*, pp. 52-4 (2nd ed.); the extract quoted is from p. 54.

liation of their followers. He wrote defending social intercourse with Christians ; and justified the point theologically. More daring, he published a study of the Bible,⁵ beginning a sympathetic commentary on it, and—against the dogma that it had been corrupted—declaring that it was reliable. By discriminating in the religions between what is essential in each and what is accretion, he arrived at the unit concept of "Religion" itself, as that which is common to all, a practical morality. He himself was genuinely tolerant, deeming a man's religion his private affair which should not be obtruded and hardly even discussed between those of different faith, lest friendship be weakened. The slightest religious bigotry distressed him.

The third period in his life, the 1870's, begins from his voyage to England, when he suddenly saw European civilisation in full swing, and was overwhelmed with it, dazed like a young child. Whereas before he had emphasised adherence to Britain politically, from now on his interest is also and enthusiastically in the cultural contribution ; he saw his task as that of persuading his community not only to accept British rule, but also to acquire Western culture. "The natives of India," he wrote home soon after arriving in London, "high and low, merchants and petty shopkeepers, educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in education, manners, and uprightness, are as like them as a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man."⁶ He said that now not only did he understand why the Englishman in India treated the "natives" with contempt, but also he thought that they well deserved it. Nothing daunted, however, he looked forward to his own country's achieving at least the same degree of culture : "If Hindustanis can only attain to civilisation, it will probably, owing to its many excellent natural powers, become, if not the superior, at least the equal of England."⁷

5. Syud Ahmud, *The Mohomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible, Part First*.

6. From a letter to "the Scientific Society at Allygurh," dated London, 15 October 1869, quoted in Graham, *op. cit.* The extract quoted is from pp. 125-6.

7. *ibid.*, p. 127.

Moreover, just as he had repudiated, and would continue to repudiate,⁸ the allegation that the Muslim community was politically anti-British, so he now vigorously denied that Islam as a religion was hostile to or even incompatible with Victorian values and ideals. The ideas which he had been developing for some time emerged now with definiteness and conviction. While in London, he replied to Muir's *Life of Muhammad* with a series of pamphlets on the Prophet,⁹ which were soon published also in Urdu and gained great vogue in India. Hardly was he back in India before he started an Urdu journal (*Tahdhzīb al-Akhlaq*—"Refinement of Morals") modelled on the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, which immediately attracted outstanding attention, as the organ of humanitarian reforms for the new social class. Meanwhile he himself defended living in the European style, and mixed freely and openly with the foreigner.

Presently he began to spread his idea of founding a Muslim College, where Western culture could be disseminated directly but along with the religion of Islam, and on the Western model. He began to collect funds for this project. Significantly, subscribers were readily found, both within the Indian middle class and in the government itself, which by now was patronising the movement. Within five years the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, was opened, with éclat. The following year he began an Urdu commentary on the Qur'ān: a radically new interpretation of Islam and its scriptures in the light of nineteenth-century rationalism.

His activities in each of these directions were exceedingly influential, gathering about themselves an obviously strong and obviously growing movement with the Islamic community.

8. In 1871 he answered Hunter's *The Indian Musalmans* in articles which claimed that even the "Wahhābīs" were not anti-British, only anti-Sikh. These were first published in *The Pioneer*, Allahabad; Urdu translation published in the *Journal of the Scientific Society*, Aligarh, 1871-2 (Abdullah, *Urdu Prose*, p. 21). Extracts are given in Graham, op. cit., pp. 141-56 (more fully, 1st ed., pp. 205-43).

9. Published 1869 and 1870 by Trubner, London; bound together and published in one volume as Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essays on the Life of Mohammed* (Urdu translation: *Khufubāt i Ahmadiyah*).

Clearly they together reflect a fundamental development in that community, and we shall study them and their significance in some detail. The remainder of his life, a period of approximately twenty years, ending just before the close of the century, he spent in consolidating and developing these activities. Before he died he had the satisfaction of seeing all of them transformed from something preciously small that needed fighting for and justifying against bitter and powerful antagonism, to something large and accepted that needed organising and finally only guiding. Politically he continued to serve the British, acting as a member for a time of the Governor-General's Council, and on numerous government commissions ; and continued to develop throughout North India the loyalty of the Muslim middle class. He devoted himself to the working of the new and flourishing College ; also, he drew about himself a group of writers and disciples stimulated by his vigorous personality and ideas. Moreover, he launched the Muhammadan Educational Conference, which was soon a highly organised society with the devoted support of many workers and a network of branches throughout Muslim India. This became an important part of the machinery of dissemination for the new and prospering attitudes on both social and religious affairs.

Let us analyse, then, his work in the fields of social culture, of education, and of theology. We have already seen how he was tremendously impressed with the civilisation of Europe, and was hopeful that his own country might emulate it. In his journal he vigorously attacked the social conservatism which rejected any advances or change, and the type of religion which upheld this. For example, he sought to overthrow the notions that Islam could not permit women out of seclusion (*pardah*) nor recognise the duty of women's education ; that Islam sanctioned aggression in the Holy War (*jihād*), or that it countenanced slavery. The campaign carried on principally in this journal was to wrench Islam and the Muslims free from the old and now decadent society to which they had become firmly anchored. As always, such a campaign roused bitter opposition from those who could not or would not sever the old connection. But the widespread

and successful interest which the journal did none the less arouse showed that there was, over against the old, a growing class of men who were ready and more than willing to be freed from that society, to launch forth into a new. The fresh pungent prose style used in the paper, and in all the writings of this school, marked a new life stirring in Urdu literature, well representing the vigour of the new class coming to birth and demanding freedom.

This class, entirely dependent on Great Britain and the West, shaking off the old and new decadent culture produced by a feudal society, found that the new culture appropriate to it was to be had almost readymade from Europe. Hence it flocked to Sir Sayyid's College and the other centres of Western learning, and supported and developed them ; not only because it must, to get jobs and to exist at all, but with enthusiasm.

The College was pro-British through and through. It was deliberately modelled after Oxford and Cambridge, its teaching was to be in English, the curriculum was the unmitigated replica of a Western one with additional religious instruction of Islam, and the principal and many members of the staff were to be Englishmen. It was, in other words, distinguishable from a Christian missionary college only by the substitution of Islam for Christianity as the religious extra ; Sir Sayyid knew the Muslims' objection to the Christian schools, and was determined that they should get a Western education none the less. As the prospectus itself puts it, the object was "to establish a College in which Musalmans may acquire an English education without prejudice to their religion."¹⁰ Sir Sayyid previously, when his ardour for Western learning had a primarily political basis, had thought in terms of using a language of India to impart it ; but by now this preference was changed, and he admitted his past "mistake". (Besides, he had run into the acute problems of diversity of scripts and languages for vernacular education.) He saw salvation for his community in the complete espousal of Western learning and science.

With this cultural allegiance to the West went a political loyalty that was equally explicit. One of the objects of the College

10. Quoted in Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 94.

was "to make the Mussulmans of India worthy and useful subjects of the British Crown,"¹¹ and its founders pompously proclaimed that "the British rule in India is the most wonderful phenomenon the world has ever seen."¹²

Theologically, Sir Sayyid's task was to distinguish from the essence of Islam all those parts of the religion which were relevant to or compatible with only the pre-bourgeois society in which it had existed. His *Essays on the Life of Mohammed* contained many quotations of approval of the Prophet from Western writers, and long answers to Western criticism, and it was published first in English in England. It was written to prove that Islam is a respectable religion, judged by modern-Western standards. Similarly his Qur'ānic commentary (never completed). He had, himself, absorbed the spirit of that Western culture, and especially its rationalism ; and was consequently equipped to perform the task well. His mind was not enslaved to the authority of Tradition and Canon Law, nor was he, as might be seen from the account of his life, a man of so ardently religious a nature that he could not view even the Qur'ān dispassionately. Consequently, he was able to subject these to rational criticism ; and he rejected from them all that was in conflict with logic and nature. His first move was to take only the Qur'ān as determinative of Islam ; "all else is subsidiary and of secondary importance."¹³ Thus he rejected the canonical "Traditions," embodying the social morality of Islam in the society of its first century or two, when they were compiled, and the Canon Law, embodying the development of that morality in the subsequent society until the time of the four accepted Legal Schools. He began afresh with the Qur'ān and brought out its relevance to the new society of his own day.

This smashing attack on reliance on ancient authority (*taqlid*) is an inherent element of the transition from a pre-bourgeois

11. Wilson, *Modern Movements Among Moslems*, p. 188.

12. From the address to the Viceroy, signed by the President, Vice-President, and Syed Ahmed, Honorary Secretary, on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the College, 8 January 1877 ; given in Graham, *op. cit.* The above extract is from p. 178 (2nd ed.).

13. Abdullah, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

to a bourgeois life. For not only was the authority in question now outdated, and irrelevant—it answered questions which in capitalist society do not arise—but also all authoritative moral codes are now in principle superseded. In an agricultural community, life is, by and large, static : the problems which the peasant faces one day are more or less similar to those that he faces another, even to those that his ancestors faced, and which, consequently, the accumulated wisdom of society has solved. In a peasant village, therefore, morality is a *system*, which can be codified, and imposed by authority. Furthermore, in such a society, the individual is used to authority in every sphere of life ; he is under constant supervision, and even his leisure is formalised in public feasts. The same is true, though to a less extent, in the old towns, with their fixed modes of production and trade. With the advent of dynamic capitalism, all this was changed. “Innumerable individuals became detached from the traditional bodies their ancestors had belonged to, and had to face life on their own account, deprived of the protection, as well as the supervision, of any authoritative body. Thus the modern independent individual came into existence.”¹⁴

Not only was the new individual without authority. The nature of his life—bourgeois society is constantly developing, changing, producing new and more complex situations—was such that he could never develop a new authority. At least, not such a new authority as the old had been, a fixed code with readymade solutions to his problems. The individual himself became morally responsible and had to decide questions on his own. (The ease with which the bourgeois has been seduced by modern fascism is due, on the psychological plane, largely to his fleeing from his personal moral responsibility to the living authority of a leader.) Being himself responsible, he needed *principles*, guiding moral generalisations with the details not yet worked out. Thus it is that Sir Sayyid, in rejecting the old Canon Law, did not replace it with a new one, nor has any of his successors done so ; but

14. Bruno Meier (pseudonym), *Moral Sanctions and the Social Function of Religion*, essay in Lewis-Polanyi-Kitchin (edd.), *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, p. 396, in a discussion of the origins of Calvinism.

emphasised only the general moral principles of the Qur'ān. The prophetic Makkah¹⁵ scriptures were quoted more and more, the legalist Madīnah ones less.

Sir Sayyid, then, rejected all but the Qur'ān as decisive in his religion. His second move was to proclaim the criterion of Reason and Nature. Members of earlier societies, whether Christian, Muslim, or whatever, have seen no objection to their theology's being "superrational"—some have even gloried in it; and it is a universal characteristic of religion in previous cultures to look upon "miracles" as proofs of the divine. Unreasonable and unnatural accounts, far from being rejected as untrue, are cherished as distinguishing the most true, God, from the inferior mundane. With the advent of capitalism, however, and the science on which it is based, this attitude has been superseded by one which neglects, as obvious accretions, anything which cannot be reconciled with reason and the laws of science.

With this method, Sir Sayyid approached the Qur'ān. There is much that seems at first sight, or anyway did seem to the orthodox tradition, to be un-(or, as they used to call it "super")-natural. But miracles and the like simply do not occur; therefore either the Qur'ān has been misinterpreted, or else it is not true. Now he did not believe in "verbal inspiration" (which is, after all, a supernatural concept), and deemed the "revelation" of both Qur'ān and Bible to be a rational thing; none the less, facing the above two alternatives, he chose to think that the Qur'ān's seeming absurdities were due to misinterpretation, especially, to that of taking allegories literally. Thus he advanced "arguments proving Meraj¹⁶ to have been a mere

15. Throughout this book the modern, precise spelling of Arabic names is followed consistently. Eventually, even such time-honoured corruptions as "Mecca" must give place to "Makkah" as above—just as "Mohamed," "Mahomed," "Mohammed," "Mahomet," etc., etc., are already giving place to the accurate "Muhammad," and "Coran," "Koran," etc., to "Qur'ān"; and as the once prevalent, now hardly recognisable, "Miramolin" has already been replaced by *Amir al-Mu'minin*. So also we have written *khilāfah* rather than "Caliph," "Kalif," "Califf," etc., and used the Arabic word *khilāfah* (Urdu *khilāfat*) rather than an English "Califate," "Kaliphate," etc.

16. *Mī'rāj*: Muhammad's night flight to Heaven.

vision"¹⁷; and so throughout. He attracted to himself and his school the supposedly derisive name "naturalist", by his policy of "interpreting the word of God by the work of God." Conformity to nature was the criterion for judging the different religions; and Islam is the true religion in that it does so conform.

The same idea of conformity to reason and nature was another ground for rejecting from Islam a morality that seemed to the liberal reasonably untenable, such as aggressive warfare, slavery, and the subjection of women; and it was also his justification for retaining, whenever he did so, some Islamic custom that the West had criticised, such as polygamy, which is in accord, he maintained, with the natural laws of humanity.

The ideas which he was putting forth bore some resemblance, and the spirit in which he was doing so even more resemblance, to those of the free-thinking *Mu'tazilī* school in the earlier history of Islam. This is not surprising, for that school flourished in a society with a very high degree of city-civilisation (especially in Baghdad and Basrah), and even with the beginnings of experimental science. None the less their society was not Sir Sayyid's society, and he referred to them when he found them in agreement, but did not "follow" them at all.

The religion which was fashioned by Sir Sayyid was, as he intended that it should be, explicitly and in fact an Islam thoroughly compatible with progress, and specifically with that progress which consisted in adopting, to the extent that the Indian bourgeois was capable, the culture of nineteenth-century Britain, with its new learning, its liberal and humanitarian morality, and its scientific rationalism.¹⁸

So much for his educational and religious position. There is value in examining further its political and economic implica-

17. From the Table of Contents of *Essay on Shakhi-Sadar and Meraḥ*, that is, *The Splitting (Open) of the Chest of Mohammed; and His Night Journey*; one of the *Essays on the Life of Mohammed*. The arguments referred to are on pp. 6 ff. of the essay.

18. By "scientific rationalism" here is meant, of course, the rationalism of nineteenth-century science, which is basically static, with its materialism mechanist, and hence incomplete, and its humanism pre-psycho and sociological.

tions. We have already mentioned his continued endeavours to foster the Muslim community under the ægis of the British. His attitude on this did not change; the situation in the country, however, did. With the continuing development of the British exploitation of India, the new bourgeois classes, especially in the most advanced areas—Calcutta, Bombay, Madras—were developing more quickly than the system was capable of absorbing them, and their frustration began, slightly at first, to set in. Movements accordingly arose amongst these, expressing their incipient discontent and designed to formulate their demands. After one or two forerunners, the Indian National Congress was formed (1885) and almost at once centred in itself this whole trend. One must not imagine that the Congress was immediately "nationalist" in the sense of later days, or that it represented a deep feeling of disloyalty; little could be more subservient than the loud protestations of allegiance with which the Congress began its career. None the less, it was a step of criticism, of "most loyal opposition," and as such was distinct from the wholly exuberant and dependent attitude of the class when it was first finding its function and exploring the not yet outgrown potentialities offered to it by its progenitor, the British. Now for the first time Sir Sayyid found his position of total and joyous acceptance of the British, challenged not only by those behind him, the reactionaries who could not share in or could not appreciate his progress, but also by those who had outstripped him, progressives like himself, but who had even more initiative and more progress than had he.

Not that he felt himself outdistanced: for his activities were confined to that section of the Indian bourgeoisie that was late in starting and had not yet reached the independent stage—namely, in the northern and inland parts of the country. Thus even when he at first ignored and then opposed the Congress movement, he still represented a large and important element in his class which continued to give him strength. Now it so happened that this element was predominantly Muslim, a fact which fitted in well with his general position. Much attention was attracted by his lecture delivered in Lucknow, 28 December 1887

(while the Congress was meeting in Madras under a Muslim President), and presently published.¹⁹ In this he re-emphasised his plan of prospering the Muslim professional classes by loyalty and favour, and warned against the alternative of the Congress. For instance, "Government will most certainly attend to it (jobs as colonels and majors in the army) provided you do not give rise to suspicions of disloyalty."²⁰ His point throughout is that the Muslim community might look for great advantages directly from the hand of the British, but that it was too weak to expect not to be submerged without those British. He wrote to his friend Col. Graham : "... I have undertaken a heavy task against the so-called National Congress, and have formed an Association, 'The Indian United Patriotic Association' . . . "²¹ Shortly before his death, he fought even that anti-British sentiment into which his community was tempted by the pan-Islamic excitement roused by the Balkan War. "He contributed articles to the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* denying the pretensions of Sultan Abdul Hamid to the Khalifate, and preaching loyalty to the British rulers of India, even if they were compelled to pursue an unfriendly policy towards Turkey."²²

This ardent and sustained pro-British policy, both politically and otherwise, owed its remarkable success and widespread influence not only to the position in which the class who accepted it found themselves, but also to the support granted to it by the British government. Of course, these two aspects of the process interpenetrate. We shall leave, for separate and detailed discussion in a later chapter, the phenomenon of communalism. Here we note simply that for several years after the Mutiny, the government deliberately repressed those sections of the Muslim community from which the new bourgeoisie would have been

19. Syed Ahmed, *On the Present State of Indian Politics*.

20. op. cit., p. 21; quoted in Krishna, *The Problem of Minorities*, p. 97, fn.

21. Letter to Graham, December 1888, published by the latter, op. cit. (2nd ed.), p. 273.

22. Krishna, op. cit., p. 95, with reference to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Truth about the Khilafat*, Lahore, 1916, 2nd edition, p. 5.

drawn. Sometime about 1870 this policy, having fulfilled its function and becoming dangerous, was replaced by one of favouring and nurturing them. Thus Sayyid Ahmad was backed in his endeavours; the British government contributed funds to found his College, and helped support it; he himself was decorated and honoured; and his oft-repeated contention, that the British would look after the Muslims if the Muslims proved their loyalty, was not left to fall flat for utter lack of evidence.

Although we shall, as we have mentioned, discuss later the communalism which began in this period to be a factor in Indian politics, a few words will be in place here as to Sir Sayyid's relation to it, especially because of his fame as a man devoted to the welfare of the *Muslim* community. In his early days the problem on an important scale did not exist, and to be interested in the welfare of one community, as Sayyid Ahmad was, did not imply any antagonism to the other one. The Scientific Society which he founded in Ghazipur (1863-4) and then moved to Aligarh, was not a communal group; though Hindus joined it only in small numbers. This is typical of his attitude: his object was to help Muslims, but his methods were nothing exclusive. Similarly in his early speeches. Later when he became more aware of communal friction, it was but to deplore it, and one could quote numerous passages in which he appealed for unity. "Do you not inhabit the same land? . . . Remember that the words Hindu and Mahomedan are only meant for religious distinction—otherwise all persons, whether Hindu or Mahomedan even the Christians who reside in this country, are all in this particular respect belonging to one and the same nation' (cheers)"²³—this as late as 1884. And he himself and his work were highly respected by members of all communities. Hindus, Christians, and Parsis contributed not only funds to help found his College, but also some students to attend it; and when he toured North India in the 'eighties he was feted on all sides. He opposed the Congress, and advised Muslims to stay out of it, because it was too disrespectful, not because it was too Hindu. He would have advised

Hindus to stay out of it too, had he had reason to offer advice to them or to suppose that it would have been accepted. Already he had dissociated himself from a purely Muslim movement of the same type, and for the same reason. He firmly believed that, along with a wholehearted but passive acquiescence in the political *status quo*, education and culture were all that was needed for the advancement in life of the bourgeoisie. He therefore had declined to support the "National Muhammadan Association" which was founded in 1877 by Amīr 'Alī in Calcutta, and others of the younger group of the Muslim middle class who now felt the need of political training and organisational activity.

Against all this, it must be noted that he did use the argument that communal friction would arise if the British departed from India, and towards the later part of his life developed this fear of Hindu domination to buttress his rather waning case for loyalty. And whereas before he had confined himself, and believed that others should confine themselves to the educational and cultural accoutrements of the bourgeois life, he now succumbed to the prevalent demand for political organisation also—but to oppose the main bourgeois movement in the country, not to join it. In 1889 he formed the Upper India Muhammadan Defence Association, where his middle-class group, at last beginning also to feel the cramp, were joining together to protect themselves against the competition of other and more advanced groups within the country. In the Governor-General's Council he favoured communal against joint electorates. And finally, one notices with some astonishment that back in 1858 he had chided the British for not forestalling the Mutiny by playing the old game of "divide and rule": "When Nadir Shah . . . became master of . . . Persia and Afghanistan, he invariably kept the two armies at equal strength. . . . When the Persian army attempted to rise, the Afghan army was at hand to quell the rebellion, and *vice versa*. The English did not follow this precedent in India. . . . Government certainly did put the two antagonistic races into the same regiment, but constant intercourse had done its work, and the two races in regiment had become almost one. It is but natural, and to be expected, that a feeling of friendship and brotherhood must

spring up between the men of a regiment, constantly brought together as they are. . . . If separate regiments of Hindus and separate regiments of Mohammedans had been raised, this feeling of brotherhood could not have arisen."²⁴

This singular lapse, however, is by no means representative of him. On the whole, Sir Sayyid may be taken as a man who devoted himself to the welfare of the Indian Muslim community in their new bourgeois adventure, working out for them a religion and a morality, and a loyalty to their rulers, thinking of that community not at all as a unit over against any other ; until, to safeguard his achievement, he opposed that other group, predominantly Hindu as it happened, which had outgrown it.

We must examine more closely the spread of his ideas, the groups among whom his influence was accepted or rejected. In the first place, it is quite obvious that he got no peasant support : the villages, representing nine-tenths of India, are still unaffected by his viewpoint, and know nothing of him. This is so commonplace that it would be superfluous to mention it, were it not necessary to ward off the danger of referring glibly to "modern Islam" as though the change in attitude reflected only a difference in time and not also one in social function. Secondly he was actively opposed by the slightly higher levels of the old society, who were free enough that they could not ignore him but not free enough to applaud. Thus the smaller townsmen, and more especially those persons whose function (and vested interest) it was to voice the ideas and ideals of the old order, the '*ukamā*' (clergy). The interests of this class were vested especially in the teaching of Persian, etc., so that the adoption of the new social order, and particularly of the English language, threatened the existence of the clergy both ideologically and economically. Their opposition was intense and vehement : Sir Sayyid was excommunicated, slandered, persecuted ; and more than once men threatened to kill him. Such religious fanaticism is a well-known phenomenon : conservatism reaches its highest emotional pitch on the religious plane. This is partly because religion embodies,

24. From *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, given in Graham, op. cit., pp. 33-57 (1st ed.). The quotation is from pp. 54-5.

in an emotional form, the values, abstracted and symbolised, of that which is wished to be conserved. There may be, and almost always is, an ideological "time-lag" between the change in objective reality, and the change in the intellectual and emotional expressions of it ; so that unintelligent men oppose—and the more religious they are, that is, the more concerned with values, the more they oppose—the ideal expressions of change long after the real change has taken place. Thus some members of Sir Sayyid's own class opposed him for a time, in whole or in part, because they were unintelligent ; or some, indeed, because they actually deplored—but ideally only—certain features of the new system, certain aspects in which it was, in fact, less valuable than the old. However, the more important opposition came not from these mental conservatives, but from the real conservatives, those who still lived in the old culture and therefore refused to have its values attacked. The mental discomfort is acute, in most cases literally intolerable, for those who find the suppositions, on which their whole mode of life is based, challenged. The ideological structure which supports, and gives meaning to a man's activities, becomes a psychological necessity ; intellectual security is as comfortable as economic ; and many men will resist all efforts to undermine it with the same vehemence and blind fury on the mental plane as a propertied class resists on the material plane efforts to disrupt the social structure on which it is based.

So much for general observations on the resistance to Sir Sayyid's innovation. To be more specific, we may profitably examine the actual composition of the audiences who listened to him. For instance, there is an account describing the group who heard his Lucknow address referred to above, when he advised pro-British and contra-Congress. It proudly lists landlords, government servants, professional men, religious leaders, members of "some of the noblest families in India" ; but apparently no one from the lower classes was there.²⁵ Again, we may note that the annual membership fee proposed for his Indian United Patriotic Association²⁶ was £ 1—a sum sufficiently large to indi-

25. Krishna, *op. cit.*, p. 96, fn.

26. Graham, *op. cit.*, (2nd ed.), p. 273.

cate to us that only the well-to do classes in society were either expected or able to be involved.

But we have noticed that his notions spread only within that section of the middle class which was late in starting and hence remained dependent longer. His influence was in northern and inland India, where British economic and cultural penetration came late. In Bengal, Bombay, and Madras, the three port areas, the centres from which British commerce and culture radiated, the bourgeoisie developed sooner, naturally, and consequently sooner reached the stage of independence. Now it so happens that those areas are predominantly Hindu (at least in their middle and upper classes ; Bengal has masses of Muslims, but they are peasants, and hence unaffected). This made the situation of pro- and anti-Congress look vaguely Hindu and Muslim ; but of course it was not actually so. Those Muslims who were in those areas joined the Congress like anyone else, and paid less attention to Sir Sayyid ; as it is usually put, his influence was less strong there. The first Congress was attended by two Muslims, who were Bombay attorneys ; the second by thirty-three ; and the third had a Muslim President²⁷ who said in his presidential address : "I, for one, am utterly at a loss to understand why Musalmans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow countrymen (applause) . . . for the common benefit of all (loud applause). Gentlemen, this is the principle on which we in the Bombay Presidency have always acted."²⁸ Similarly, the other early Muslim Congressites entered the movement in a spirit quite indistinguishable from that of the Hindus, and urged other Muslims to join it with reasons quite as substantial as were Sir Sayyid's for staying out—but cogent to a differently placed group.

Finally, that Sir Sayyid and those for whom he was spokesman differed, as a class, only in the stage which they had reached in a process and not more fundamentally, is shown by their

27. Hon. Mr Badr-al-Din Tayyibji.

28. Andrews & Mukerji, *The Rise and Growth of the Congress in India*, pp. 172-3.

eventually passing on too from that to the next stage. "Towards the end of his life, Sir Sayyid felt the justice of the Congress demands,"²⁹ especially with regard to the unequal treatment of Indians and Europeans. In other words, his class too was eventually beginning to feel that there were not enough jobs to go around, and that they should be doing something about it.

The Aligarh School

The movement led by Sir Sayyid flourished, and attracted many who in turn expounded and expanded its ideas. We shall examine, from amongst those many, two or three of the prominent who differed little if at all from the leader, contributing to the movement not much in the way of originality but a great deal in their very valuable services as early and active proponents. Then we shall study the later developments, in writers who carried the attitude to its fullest expression, and in one or two with whom it remains even to the present day, long after the general trend has been transformed. Finally we shall observe a trend within the movement which from the first diverged somewhat towards a greater degree of religiousness, and a less complete break with the Islamic past; this trend formed the basis of the transition to the next major development.

Among those who wrote frequently in the journal *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, smashing away at the adherence of Islam to an outworn social system, was one Chirāgh 'Alī, whose pen had much controversial force. He was a government servant who had begun in a petty position and rose gradually and steadily. He had been disturbed by the missionaries' criticism of his religion. For a time, before meeting Sir Sayyid, he was attracted to Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qadian and his method of countering those criticisms. When he came in contact with the Aligarh movement, he transferred to it his enthusiastic support. Apart from his articles in the journal *Tahdhib*, his writings were mostly in English; though they soon found their way into Urdu translations. He wrote on the peacefulness of Islam,³⁰ to refute the popular idea

29. *Eminent Mussalmans*, p. 35.

30. *A Critical Exposition of the Popular Jihād*, Calcutta, 1883. (Urdu translation: *Tahqiq al-Jihād*.)

of religious war and imposition of faith by force, maintaining that all Muhammad's wars were defensive. He wrote on the Prophet himself, contending, for instance, that he had abolished slavery, and so on, quite in the new spirit. His most comprehensive and instructive book is the *Proposed Reforms*,³¹ in which appears at its most explicit the separation of religion and society by which the West had already achieved the same compatibility of religion with the capitalist order. Little could be clearer than his own estimate of the task before them: "I have endeavoured to show in this book that Mohammadanism as taught by Mohammad, the Arabian Prophet, possesses sufficient elasticity to enable it to adapt itself to the social and political revolutions going on around it."³² He also betrays that the task is negative only, to get rid of the Muslim barriers to progress. "Islam as a religion is quite apart from inculcating a social system. The Mohammedan polity and social system have nothing to do with religion"³³; "in short, the Koran or the teachings of Mohammad are neither barriers to spiritual development or free-thinking on the part of Mohammadans, nor an obstacle to innovation in any sphere of life, whether political, social, intellectual, or moral. All efforts at spiritual and social development are encouraged as meritorious and hinted at in several verses of the Koran."³⁴ He then quotes the Tradition in which Muhammad advises an Arab about his date crop and afterwards admits that his advice had been mistaken and that " 'he was merely a man. What he instructed them in their religion they must take, but when he ventured his opinion in other matters he was only a man'. This shows that Mohammad never set up his own acts and words as an infallible or unchangeable rule of conduct in civil and political affairs, or, in other words, he never combined the Church and State into one."³⁵ (Is it any wonder that these writers were eagerly listened

31. *The Proposed Political, Legal, and Social Reforms in the Ottoman Empire and Other Mohammadan States*, Bombay, 1883. (Urdu translation, *A'zam al Kalām*.)

32. *ibid.*, Introduction, p. ii.

33. *ibid.*, p. xxxiv.

34. *ibid.*, p. xxxv.

35. *ibid.*, p. xxxvi.

to by those who, straining to move ahead into the glorious or lucrative prospects of the new society, had been afraid that their religion might forbid them?)

The above, by way of introduction, is followed by a detailed discussion of political and social questions, such as religious liberty, the position of women, divorce, slavery. In this, the attacks of Christian writers, that the defects of Islamic society are inherent vices of Islamic religion, are rebutted.

Another man—also in the bureaucracy, rising therein from a small post, his reward for Mutiny loyalty, to a handsome one—who attached himself to the Aligarh group, is Sayyid Mahdī 'Alī, entitled Muḥsin al-Mulk. He became prominent, not only as a brilliant writer, especially in the journal *Tahdhīb* which owed much to him, but also for his ardent seconding of Sir Sayyid's educational programme. He firmly believed in the new society, in the new Qur'ānic interpretations to support it, and worked hard to convey these ideas. He also shared Sir Sayyid's conviction that what was most needed for this was education. Education was the hope of the Muslim community. It had been among the prime causes of that community's greatness in the past. It would banish the false religion of superstition, idolatrous custom, and pleasant fable but would make the true religion of the Qur'ān shine brilliantly.

He devoted himself with enthusiasm to the Muhammadan Educational Conference, went propagandising for it throughout India, and led it after Sir Sayyid's death. He also succeeded his friend as secretary of College at Aligarh.

He continued his leader's political attitudes also. In fact, he carried them even further: further in time, by proclaiming as late as 1906 that the Sulṭān of Turkey was not to be considered *khalifah* ("Caliph") of the Indian Muslims, and stressing the religiously-binding allegiance due to the British³⁶; further in concrete organisation, by his prominent part in getting together the Āghā Khān deputation to the Viceroy that year and in founding the reactionary Muslim League.

36. In an article in *The Englishman*, Calcutta, 26 June 1906. This is quoted in *Eminent Musalmans*, p. 91.

One of the most delightful and winning books, published on behalf of the Aligarh movement, is a small one by one Muṣṭafā Khān : *An Apology for the New Light*, 1891. It was not outstandingly famous, but is representative of the trend at its best, and is hence instructive. "New Light" was one of the names hurled at the group in derision, but this writer welcomed it, and set out to defend from criticism those so named, and to urge them on. The essay is excellent : liberal, rational, wise, and withal quiet, humorous, effective. It is an appeal for tolerance and progress, showing a good understanding of their necessity.

The movement's earliest stages, when it was bitterly opposed and threatened with violence, had passed by now ; but its still tentative nature is reflected when this author says that the New Light people "feel isolated : unsympathetic words and looks dog their steps."³⁷ The main characteristics of the movement are summed up thus :

1. The adoption to some varying greater or less extent of English dress and other outward accompaniments of a European civilization.

2. A certain amount of dissatisfaction with the existing mode of religious thought.

3. A desire for certain social reforms.³⁸

The first and third of these are two aspects of one trend, Anglicisation : recognising as valuable for them the civilisation of the West. (This is specifically stated later, when he writes that civilisation is the goal, the criterion, of effort ; and then compares present-day Western with present-day Indo-Muslim. The old Indo-Muslim civilisation, of Akbar's day, was excellent (and tolerant); but that is unfortunately now gone; therefore "the . . . 'New Light' . . . have chosen European civilization as their model."³⁹ Even in theology, the wording of the second item shows, it is a matter of adjustment rather than creativity. It is recognised that the old mode of thought is inadequate for the

37. Mustafa Khan, *An Apology for the New Light*, p. 12.

38. *ibid.*, p. 2, fn.

39. *ibid.*, p. 55.

new culture, incompatible with it ; something must be done to bring it up to date.

Politically, he notes the accusation that the movement is unpatriotic, but assures his readers that such is not the case. As for the fact that some Muslims favour the Congress, he points out that so far he has found no reason stated which seems to him to outweigh Sir Sayyid's warning.

The class content of the new religious position comes to its fullest expression in the writings of Professor Khudā Bakhsh, of Calcutta. He was not unusually influential (though he did a good deal to introduce the scholarship of Western orientalism into Indian Islam). But he is important for two reasons : first, because he reflects faithfully the thinking of his class ; and secondly, because he has attracted much attention in the West. We shall study him again later, for the former reason ; whatever were the new developments in Indian middle-class Islam, his attitude changed to meet them. Meanwhile we shall analyse his early position, as seen in two essays, *The Spirit of Islam* and *Thoughts on the Present Situation*, published in 1912.⁴⁰ Such an analysis will repay us with an insight into the culmination of the religion of the group that he represents.

His was not a deeply religious spirit. Nevertheless, he was deeply interested in his religion, as a factor in the society to which he belonged, and he wanted to see it reformed. Like the others of this school, he saw the customs and superstitions of the old Islam as not intrinsic, but the expression of the decadent society to which they belonged. Using the results of Western scholarship, he would analyse them out of Islam. He did not, however, adopt the theory that he was but restoring Islam to its pristine purity ; rather he innovated consciously, striving for a modern religion. "It would be the merest affectation to contend that religious and social systems, bequeathed to us thirteen hundred years ago, should now be adopted in their entirety without the slightest change or alteration"⁴¹ ; and he explicitly rejects even from the Qur'ān the legal matter and social customs : "The Qur'ān, rightly

40. Khuda Bukhsh, *Essays : Indian and Islamic*.

41. *ibid* , p 220.

understood, . . . is a spiritual guide, . . . putting forward ideals to be followed . . . rather than a *corpus juris civilis* to be accepted for all time."⁴² On examination, the reform that he advocated appears to be, like Sir Sayyid's but more explicitly, mostly negative. He wanted Islam to get rid of all those aspects which hinder a full acceptance of modern bourgeois culture: "Is Islam hostile to progress? I will emphatically answer this question in the negative. Islam, stripped of its theology, is a perfectly simple religion. Its cardinal principle is belief in one God and belief in Mohamed as his apostle. The rest is mere accretion, superfluity."⁴³ "The requirements of Islam are at once easy and simple, and leave scope to Muslims to take part in their duties as subjects or citizens, to attend to their religious obligation *without sacrificing their worldly prosperity*, and to adopt whatever is good in any community or civilization, *without any interference on the part of the religion*."⁴⁴

The new Islam that he envisages is indeed simple. He readily says that it is indistinguishable from all true religions, and especially Christianity, which he frequently praises. It consists in little more than the spirit of charity—of course on the part of the more fortunate members of society. It is clear throughout that he is writing with this class in mind; the very fact that he writes in English shows this, but also he repeatedly refers to situations in which only the middle classes ever find themselves (for instance, when he urges young Muslims to choose their careers in trade rather than government service). There is practically nothing in his morality that would have any application to the life of the dispossessed.

He is, then, a bourgeois, and he has thoroughly absorbed the bourgeois ideology. There is, of course, philosophic idealism: "We believe . . . that opinion, and nothing but opinion, can effect great permanent changes"⁴⁵—hence, we must combat social evils not by political action but by education.⁴⁶ By freedom, he means freedom of thought.⁴⁷ There is the well-known bourgeois state-

42. *ibid.*, p. 284.

44. *ibid.*, p. 20 (*italics ours*).

46. *ibid.*, p. 215.

43. *ibid.*

45. *ibid.*, p. 241.

47. *ibid.*, p. 219.

ment that religion should keep out of politics ; and the well-known bourgeois meaning of the statement that it should support the *status quo*. "I have . . . kept aloof from . . . Indian politics"⁴⁸—actually he had been staunchly pro-British— ; two pages later, "We must actively support the Government in destroying sedition and anarchy"⁴⁹ ; immediately afterwards, but this time referring to social reform, "We must, for the present, banish politics from the programme of our activity."⁵⁰ Furthermore, there is gradualism : "Let us proceed, but with slow, cautious steps."⁵¹ But most telling is his list of virtues, without change those of early capitalism : thrift, hard work, temperance, education, and the like. Of "the most glaring and the most obvious"⁵² vices from which Muslim society is suffering, idleness is ranked first and the neglect of trade and commerce second. He writes against polygamy and the seclusion of women ; we must be modern.

His acceptance of Western civilisation is complete ; he sees nothing immoral, nothing un-Islamic, in industrial capitalism. "There is nothing in its [i.e. Islam's] teachings which conflicts with or militates against modern civilization."⁵³ He makes no criticisms of slums, exploitation (or interest), wars ; not to mention the more subtle bourgeois faults, acquisitiveness, frustration, and the like. He makes no attempt to discriminate between good and bad in the new culture. When once he comes near to doing so, it is to complain that Indians have copied Western ways of spending money, but not of earning it. "We have developed expensive habits ; we are imitating luxurious modes of living, but we have not succeeded in learning that supremest of practical lessons—viz. the lesson of making money."⁵⁴ Politically, his support of the British conquest is equally wholehearted: ". . . the Empire to which we have the honour to belong. . . ."⁵⁵

Thus, while he advocates progress over against those behind

48. *ibid.*, p. 213.

50. *ibid.*

52. *ibid.*, p. 228.

54. *ibid.*, p. 240.

49. *ibid.*, p. 215.

51. *ibid.*, p. 218.

53. *ibid.*, p. 24.

55. *ibid.*, p. 227; cf. notes 48 and 49 above.

the times who oppose the new society, he wants no further social change. Although he is in one respect consciously innovating, from feudal to bourgeois order, he is in another respect the rigid conservative: he is half-conscious that a still newer society is adumbrated, and he is against it. He, whose appointed task was to cry out against that religious conservatism which tended to preserve one form of society against progress to the next, now would have religion assist in keeping the present society from being superseded. In true conservative style, he regards religion as a social check, one "far more effective than . . . the Indian Penal Code,"⁵⁶ without which society would crumble.

This inner contradiction leads him to many positions where he must vacillate, and to inconsistencies. In berating the toadying and office-grabbing of the new condition, he is forced into lauding "the old system" which, "with all its faults, had many redeeming virtues"⁵⁷; and frequently he must appear for all the world like numberless early-bourgeois fathers lecturing their children on the dissoluteness of the modern day. Fresh from demolishing the Islamic reverence for tradition, he warns that there must be respect for law and order, for one's betters, even respect for age.⁵⁸ He protests against the present neglect of Arabic.⁵⁹ And so on. But the most important evidence of this vacillating position is the general indecisiveness of all his writing. He can analyse for faults of the past, and sweep them away; but of the present he can do so only to the slightest extent; and he has nothing really positive and new to offer as a constructive suggestion for the future. In so far as he is able to see the problems in the present new culture, rather than solving them in tomorrow's way he is driven back in fear to the past which he has otherwise rejected.

In fine, he is not a creative thinker. There was but one contribution that he could make; and this he did make, assiduously, in spite of the bitter opposition that he met in his determination to spread modern ideas about Islam. This contribution was to those of his fellows (and they were not few) who wanted to be

56. *ibid.*, p. 224.

58. *ibid.*, pp. 226 f.

57. *ibid.*

59. *ibid.*, pp. 281 ff.

good bourgeois capitalists, but might have some doubts about its being hardly the right, the Muslim, thing to do. He would happily remove all their misgivings.

Such is Khudā Bakhsh. We cannot leave him without pointing out the hearty reception which his thinking received in the West. One after another of the Western writers on modern Islam (and not least the missionaries) have welcomed him as the last word in Muslim modernisation, and have praised his liberalism to the skies. Therein they but betray to what class they themselves belong.

By the time of the First World War, this whole school of thought had fulfilled its function, and was giving way. But there have remained a few to whom it has been useful, and one finds occasional traces of it down to the present day. Its constituency has always been those basically satisfied with the political and economic *status quo*; naturally that constituency is nowadays singularly small. During and just after the last War, members of the bureaucracy had cause to remain contentedly loyal, whatever might be the fate of Muslim Turkey, or Muslim townsfolk in Amritsar. One finds, accordingly, scattered pronouncements by these people ranking the Muslims' duty to the established local government higher than that to the *khalīfah*, and deeming that anything Muhammad may have said apparently anti-capitalist was either not really so or was not to be taken seriously. It is interesting that beginning with Khudā Bakhsh in 1912, this kind of writing has been virtually confined to the English language; there is no market for it outside the highly Westernised circles.

Among those who have maintained the position, and attracted some attention to themselves, is Yūsuf 'Alī, also in government service. He is above all respectable, is noticeable for the mass of his writings, and keeps his authority by being rationalist and quite idealist, and by introducing an imposing display of modern knowledge. The Muslims are rather proud of him. The social implications of his religious position appear most clearly in an article on *The Religious Polity of Islam*⁶⁰ that appeared in 1933. In his discussion on this subject, he managed not to mention

60. *Islamic Culture*, vol. VII, no. 1 (Jan. 1933).

national independence or to discuss the question of Muslims under alien rule. In true Sir Sayyid fashion, he maintained that modern bourgeois departures are not inconsistent with Islamic law, even defending Turkey's "lay state" on the grounds that "in some aspects Islam is itself a lay religion, having no consecrated or privileged priesthood"⁶¹ and referring with approval to the works of modern writers ('Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq and Barakat Allāh) who regard the *khilāfah* ("Caliphate") as non-temporal authority. Speaking of the adoption of the Swiss Code or the Code Napoleon by Muslim communities, he says: "No doubt some people may call it impious or anti-Islamic. To me it is a matter of convenience."⁶² But the codes mentioned are bourgeois codes, fundamentally interested in the rights of property. Would he be equally content were a socialist code introduced? He did not discuss the Muslims' states in the new U.S.S.R. His bourgeois interests and ideology are often in evidence. "Private property is lawful, and encroachments on it are encroachments on liberty."⁶³ Injustice and oppression are defined as "preventing the free use of life and limbs, property, and lawful things"⁶⁴—clearly he has never suffered from hunger, unemployment or the like. Nor does he write for those who have met injustice and oppression in such forms; "freedom" for the middle class means freedom for, not from, exploitation. "The laws against usury . . . have been interpreted narrowly, and in my opinion wrongly, to bar commercial interest."⁶⁵

Such is his practical conception of the law. The theory behind it is mystical and unrelated to anything very brutal or real. The following passage was published in India, whose constitutional and legal system the author in practice religiously upholds: "Austin's analysis of sovereignty as linked with force—of Law as meaningless unless backed with the sanction of force—is unacceptable to Islam."⁶⁶ He goes on to outline his conception of law as postulating "something archetypal and

61. loc. cit., p. 17.

63. *ibid.*

65. *ibid.*, p. 19.

62. *ibid.*, p. 13.

64. *ibid.*

66. *ibid.*, p. 14.

eternal at the base,"⁶⁷ where it is linked with religion and ethics, with a superstructure adapted to the circumstances. He admitted that "what are the boundaries between the immutable principles, and the human provisions that must always be altered"⁶⁸ is a matter of dispute, to which dispute he offers no solution beyond appealing to the Islamic doctrine of public opinion (*ijmā'*) and the instances of the Swiss and Napoleonic codes already mentioned. The position amounts in the end to the inevitable bourgeois "morality," of a philosophic dualism having a religio-ethical ideal in mind, but a purely "practical" system in fact.

Like all the others of this school, while fighting for "progress" up to the present, he must uphold that present, the *status quo*, against any further development. Those who wish a still newer society must be denied even constitutional means. "No electorate ought to be allowed to return members who are frankly out to destroy the State, though the tendencies in modern undiluted democracies is to chance everything on a stake of universal suffrage."⁶⁹ Note the apprehension: "chance everything"; and the contempt: "undiluted democracies".

Another late exponent of these views has been Sir Aḥmad Husayn (Amīn Jang), of His Exalted Highness the Nizām's pro-British government, whose published views⁷⁰ have been sufficiently popular to go through more than one edition. He thought of Islam somewhat as a system of generous respectability. Religion was defined as the motive for living virtuously; and Islam is the best religion he knew "because . . . it accords best with the current ideas of science."⁷¹ Islam, being the spirit of monotheism, grace, and moderation, inspiring reverence, trust, and virtue, is to be distinguished from Muhammadanism, the obsolescent formalism of the old-fashioned clergy and the customs of the decadent people; and *mū'min* ("believer") is to include

67. *ibid.*

68. *ibid.*, p. 12.

69. *ibid.*, p. 18.

70. Sir Ahmed Hussain, *Notes on Islam*. The booklet is a collection of admittedly unintegrated memoranda on Islam.

71. *op. cit.*, p. 81; cf. also pp. 43 ff.

virtually the liberals of all religions, and especially Christians. " 'True Islam is but true Christianity writ short,' " he writes.⁷² Clearly he is one who, with his titles and positions, would wipe away the old society and its allegiances, and keep only the quintessence of Islam's, or for that matter any religion's, spirit while he accepts the society of the West. By all means reform Islam, as Christianity was reformed in its fourteenth century and, after; but "it need not necessarily mean Political Revolutions as in Europe."⁷³ In reality, the political revolution had already taken place, establishing British imperialism in India with him as one of its pillars. What he means is that he wants no further political change.

Thus, in a few scattered cases, has the pure Aligarh position been preserved unchanged in a changing society. But there were, of course, almost from the start divergent trends in writers who were influenced by Sir Sayyid but who accepted his position with reservations or with additions of their own. Some of these are interesting and important in themselves, some also because the divergencies they introduced were later increasingly taken up as the general Muslim middle class found itself in new situations and found these divergencies more and more relevant.

Amongst those who from the first worked amply for the new move in Islam, while giving to it a distinctive contribution from their own personalities the most eminent is Alṭāf Ḥusayn, the poet Ḥālī. He is one of the great figures in modern Islamic literature. His work as a biographer, literary critic, etc., does not, of course, concern us here, nor the appreciation of him as a poet; suffice it to say that the weight of so great a man counted for much when lent to a struggling movement.

Ḥālī was younger than the others. His knowledge of English was limited, which makes him a somewhat more popular figure, in the sense that he had travelled less far across the gulf which separated the people from the small, new, and isolated middle class. However, he came in contact with English thought early, through his work in a translation bureau while in government

72. *ibid* , p. 85.

73. *ibid.*, p. 96.

service in Lahore, and later he moved to Delhi where he came to know Sir Sayyid. He developed a close friendship with and great admiration for that leader, and afterwards wrote his life.⁷⁴ He contributed to his journal, and displayed much enthusiasm for the new order. (The first thing he wrote had been an answer to the polemic of a Christian missionary from his home town.) Throughout his life (he died in 1914) he served the Aligarh movement, and dedicated many of his poems to it.

Hāli's one work which outshone all others, both as a pre-eminent contribution to Urdu poetry and for the impetus which it gave to the modernising school in Islam, is his epic *Musaddas*. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this beautifully done work in the Muslim community. It penetrated therein a good deal further than the previous writings that we have considered, which were primarily apologetics for the Anglicised upper-middle class. Hāli's appeal was less defensive, less negative, and a much more general exhortation to the whole community to recognise and welcome social change. As such, it could be, and was, appreciated by all those who were affected by the new bourgeois developments and expansions, and not only those who were taking part in carrying them out. He stressed the eternal movement of Time, the continual and divine supersession of one form by another—well expressing the shift from a static feudal society to a developing capitalist one. He weighed the "this-worldly" aspect of religion: the whole tone of the poem suggests that Islam is a civilisation, that religion is a force whose results are to be looked for in life. The Muslim community and Islam itself must live by and in the world; such is their essence. This attitude was insinuated more effectively, less argumentatively, than by the prose-writers.

Finally, Hāli differed most significantly in his proud reconstruction of the Islamic past, in his appeal to the Muslims' own glorious history. This is exceedingly important, for it forms the basis for the whole next period in religious development, which we shall be considering later. He berated the existing society and insisted on its decadence, its inadequacy—as the others were

74. *Ḥayāt i Jawid*.

doing; but he did so by comparing it not with the contemporary Western foreign culture but with the past achievements of Islam. He called up the ancient glories of the Muslim empires in Spain and Baghdad, and drew the bitter contrast between them and the present day. He did not delineate carefully the new culture towards which he asked in the most general terms for movement; and his religion, accordingly, was much less defined. These things, of course, helped him to provoke less opposition than did the out-and-out Anglicisers.

In a sense, therefore, Ḥālī's position is somewhat of a popular recession from the advanced views of Sir Sayyid and his more immediate school. This tendency is clearer in various other men. Dhakā Allāh (1832-1910), who shared in the adoring enthusiasm for Western liberalism and British rule, was a staunch supporter of Sir Sayyid and his projects, and, himself a mathematician, was all for modern knowledge and especially science. His significance lies in the fact that he championed the cause of the vernacular, himself translating a good deal of science, etc., into Urdu and even writing in that language original text-books (including a voluminous history of India). Towards the end of his life he realised that his struggle for Urdu was a failure. This is instructive: it will be remembered that Sir Sayyid himself had once worked for translated learning, but, more attuned to his class, had shifted as it became clear that the dependence on Britain was to be total. To-day few can be found to advocate education's being imparted in a foreign tongue.

Nadhīr Aḥmad, like Dhakā Allāh a product of the pre-Mutiny Delhi College, was prominent primarily as a novelist. His stories had a social interest, and represent the first novels on the Western style in Urdu. They portrayed convincingly the tensions, problems, and bewilderment of the day. These novels penetrated far into literate Muslim society; and about them there gathered a good deal of the discussion and controversy stimulated by the new conditions. The liberalism which Nadhīr Aḥmad had learned at the Delhi College was encouraged further by his acquaintance with Sir Sayyid, whom he greatly admired and claimed to follow, and to whose educational programme in particular he devoted

himself with energy after his retirement from government service. His novels did much to disseminate the new Aligarh point of view.

However, he was an independent spirit in the movement, and is significant for representing a more conservatively religious position. Politically, he was every whit as pro-British as Sir Sayyid; but socially and religiously he contended for a less radical reform. He deemed Sir Sayyid's one fault to be that he "went to extremes" in his free thinking; and he himself expounded an interpretation of Islam which should be in the same basic spirit as the reformers', yet making fewer concessions to the modern mind.

For example, he preserved belief in the supernatural in so far as the Qur'ān was concerned, taking the *jinn* (genii) and angels, for instance, to be spiritual species and not, as Sir Sayyid had done, as symbolic language for the ordinary powers of nature. This was purely a mental compromise between the feudal and bourgeois, for while he did not reject the miraculous from thoughts about a sacred past, he had quite eliminated it from the present, so that it did not come up for any practical consideration.

He was disturbed at that neglect of religion which, he diagnosed, was the price to pay for total adjustment to bourgeois demands. He therefore reintroduced to religious exposition something of the orthodox tradition, and developed his views not altogether apart from the lines of the scholastic theologues; especially of a reformer like the eighteenth-century Shāh Wali Allāh of Delhi. Nadhīr Aḥmad made the first translation of the Qur'ān into literary Urdu. It and his theological commentary⁷⁵ were very influential. Because he was more conversant and sympathetic with traditional Islam, his religious reforms were acceptable to a large group than were Sir Sayyid's. In one of his novels he "exhorts the younger generation to lead a truly religious life and to avoid the raging storm of disbelief and scepticism that had followed in the wake of Western education. It is, in fact, a

75. *Al-Huqūq wa al-Fara'iq*.

mild protest and reaction against some of the ideas promoted by Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān.⁷⁶

This mild protest and reaction reached its fullest expression in Muḥammad Shiblī, called Nu'mānī (1857-1914). This man is another genius of commanding importance: few would rank a fourth along with Ḥālī, Shiblī, and Iqbāl, as the great literary figures in modern Indian Islam. He was the founder of modern literary criticism in the vernacular, was a poet, and was outstanding as an historian and biographer. We are interested in him in this study for the exceedingly important position which he represented in the new religious orientation, not only through his direct contributions to theology and philosophy, but even more for the general religious direction in which all his scholarship moved. Sir Sayyid approached Islam from the values of the modern West; Shiblī approached Western values from the viewpoint of Islam. His programme was not to reform Islam with some new criterion, but to revive it from within, his ambitious vision including the rehabilitation of Islamic learning in its entirety, along the lines of its flowering under the 'Abbāsīs in Baghdad. He was acutely conscious of how cut off Sir Sayyid was from the Islamic background, how unaware of the entire development of Islam from Muḥammad's day to his. Shiblī was not prepared to make the total break which Sir Sayyid had deliberately effected; and his function was therefore to speak for those thousands who were likewise unwilling. He spoke profoundly and well.

Shiblī was born the year of the Mutiny, of an illustrious land-owning family. His education was traditional, and he showed his inherent conservatism by opposing the "Wahhābī" reforms with contempt and vehemence. When in Madīnah on pilgrimage he had set himself to a more thorough study of orthodoxy, and liked it. A few years later, however, we find him taking his younger brother to be educated at Aligarh, which proves that he was not opposed at least to English education. While there, he and Sir Sayyid made a considerable impression on each other, and he was asked, and consented, to stay on as lecturer in Arabic and Persian. He was twenty-five at that time, and remained at the

76. Abdullah, op. cit., p. 176. The novel referred to is *Ru'ya' i Ṣādiqah*.

College for sixteen years, until Sir Sayyid's death. He was fascinated by the new learning to which he was suddenly introduced, and during his stay there absorbed much of the modern spirit—but never its secularism. Reason he saw as the handmaid of religion—not to be repudiated, as the orthodox of the decadence had done, but still to be subservient. He envisaged his task as that of the rationalist *Mu'tazilī* sect of the early centuries of Islam, to produce a synthesis of Islamic doctrine with philosophy (in that case Hellenist); and, accordingly, to combat irreligious thought.

Shiblī, unlike Sir Sayyid, accepted the whole of Islam, with its history; knew it and loved it; and, grasping the necessity of expressing *that* Islam in terms understood and appreciated by the modern half-Westernised world, set about to do so. Typical of his method, and his whole viewpoint, is that, before producing his theology for to-day, he wrote a preliminary history of theology in the past. “‘Since long, I had an idea,’” he said, “‘to reconstruct the religious thought of Islam in the light of new philosophy and on new lines suited to the taste of the moderns; but before undertaking such a work, a *history of Scholastic Theology appears to be essential.*’”⁷⁷ How different from Sir Sayyid's thinking—and yet, how attractive to those still attached to the old culture. For instance, he justified his use of rationalism in the second book by proving in the first (also in separate biographies of the saints that he had written) that the eminent theologians of Islam were learned in philosophy and approved its study. Thus did he attack the taboo in recent Islam on philosophy and reason.

The theological position which he does proffer is, as one would expect, a compromise between the past and the present. He never shelved the supernatural part of religion, though he appreciated to some extent the modern this-worldly criterion; on

77. *‘Ilm al-Kalām*, p. 4: the translation is S.M. Abdullah's, and is taken from his *Urdu Prose*, p. 56; the italics are ours. Also, we have translated his words *‘Ilm i Kalām* in the last clause. The two books referred to are: *‘Ilm al-Kalām*, c. 1903, a history of Islamic theology in the past; and *Al-Kalām*, 1904, an exposition of his own ideas on religion for the modern age.

the other hand, he rejected most of the miraculous element from the biographies of his heroes, and a good deal even from that of the Prophet, whom he presented as an almost fully human being. He rejected aggressive war. Again intermediate, he favoured both seclusion (*pardah*) and education for women. He wrote a life⁷⁸ of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, the classic Muslim legist whom he admired; to defend and to praise his *Ḥanafī* school on the ground that its decisions were all reached by the finest use of reason and unbiased sanity, the least dependence on traditionalism. Thus does he compromise between the accepted code and rationalism.

Like Ḥālī's, Shiblī's knowledge of English was limited. A voyage to the Near East in 1892 brought him in contact with Egyptian modernism, which was itself conditioned by quite a fair degree of Europeanisation and economic penetration; and he kept in touch with men like Rashīd Riḍā' and Muḥammad Farīd Wajdi (neither very progressive, really; their function, like his, was to preserve as much of the old Islam as possible in a modern age).

Muḥsin al-Mulk differed from Sir Sayyid in desiring to win over the theologues to the new views. It was through Shiblī that this was accomplished—so far as it could be accomplished: naturally, the ideas were much watered down in the process. Shiblī himself, as we have seen, was much less advanced than the main body of the Aligarh School; but to the clergy he seemed an intolerable heretic. He took over in 1908 the principalship of a theological academy (*Nadwat al-'Ulamā'*) in Lucknow, recently founded, and introduced many innovations of a liberal kind. Before long he had to leave, so much opposition did he arouse. However, he did manage, in this way and generally through the influence of his writings, to make infiltrate into the traditional theological structure of Indian Islam as much modernism as that structure simply had to have if it was to survive at all. "He strengthened the forces of conservatism and orthodoxy, be this his merit or demerit."⁷⁹ It is Shiblī through whom the new Islam—worked out for the full-blown bourgeoisie by Sir Sayyid

78. *Sirat al-'Nu'mān*.

79. Abdullah, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

and Nadhīr Aḥmad—found its way, in ever weakening doses, into those wider and wider circles touched but not formed by the new bourgeois penetration.

Hālī, as we have seen, summoned up a pride in Islam's past glories, and urged modern Muslims to emulate them. Shiblī worked this out in great detail, not only referring to that past but displaying it. He won a claim (not altogether justified) to careful and excellent scholarship in his historical researches, wherein he resuscitated and praised the great men of Muslim history and their times. A whole series of influential biographies, of the Prophet,⁸⁰ of great men of the early days of Islam⁸¹ and the flourishing 'Abbāsī Empire,⁸² of great theologians⁸³ and of the Iranian poets,⁸⁴ reminded Muslims unforgettably of their great heritage. These works were most extensively read and have not yet failed to find a wide and appreciative public.

Not only, however, did he himself write Islamic history. He had set himself to revive past culture not merely by rewriting it, but in fact reviving within modern Islam that culture's creativity. After his endeavours to rehabilitate theological learning at the Lucknow seminary, he set about to organise a school of writers who should carry on the highest traditions of Muslim learning. Hence a Writers' Institute (*Dār al-Muṣannifīn*), at Azamgarh, sometimes known as "Shiblī's Academy," which he instituted and endowed the year before his early death.

Before concluding, it is important that we note his political position—which, like his religion, was intermediate between the old and the radically new. However, it was never clearly defined; he tended to avoid political issues. On the whole, he accepted the British occupation, and recognised in it several possible advantages, especially cultural. As late as 1908 "in a very learned

80. *Sirat al-Nabī*—left unfinished at his death and since carried on by his pupil and successor Sulaymān Nadwī.

81. *Al-Fārūq*, 1899. This has been translated into English, the first volume by Mawlānā Ṣafar 'Alī Khān, and the second by Prof. Salim, and published.

82. *Al-Mā'mūn*, 1889.

83. *Sirat al-Nu'mān*, 1893. *Al-Ghazālī*, 1902. *Sawānīḥ Mawlānā Rūm*.

84. *Shi'r al-'Ajam* in 5 volumes, 1908 ff.

article . . . he had proved that fidelity to the ruling power was a religious duty for a Muslim."⁸⁵ Nevertheless, his own fidelity to the past history of Islam as a great and independent Power could hardly fail to place his sympathy with those who, when the appropriate time came, were resisting the modern imperialistic encroachments on the last vestige of that Power. The beginnings of anti-British fervour which formed themselves around Turkey's plight in the Balkan War, about 1912, drew from him pan-Islamic poems of remarkable sting. Then over the Cawnpore mosque incident, when Muslim discontent took a more Indian form,⁸⁶ he wrote verses of sufficient point to evoke the government's displeasure.

But with these considerations we are getting well into the twentieth century, when the situation, never stationary, had moved far from that of Sir Sayyid's day. We shall study in our next section the full development of Islam for that new situation.

*A Note on the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College
(Muslim University), Aligarh*

We have already had much occasion to refer to Sir Sayyid's College at Aligarh, in connection with the development of the new movement in Islam. The College was the obvious intellectual centre for this movement, and has continued to be important for this and other reasons. A few observations, therefore, on its subsequent history will be useful. As an educational institution, it grew and prospered, and attracted an increasing number of students, an increasingly able staff. It served mostly the United Provinces and the Punjab, but soon after the turn of the century young men were coming to it from all parts of not only India but the Islamic world. In 1920 it was raised in status from a college

85. Bhajiwalla, Life of Shibli, in his: *Maulana Shibli anā Umar Khayyam*, p. 36.

86. In 1913, the government began to demolish part of a mosque in Cawnpore in connection with the widening of a street. This sort of thing had been done many times in the past and had gone unnoticed; by this date discontent was such that a protest meeting was held, which, when it refused to disperse, was fired upon.

to a unitary university. It is still expanding to-day, endeavouring especially to build up science departments on a par with the already well-established humanities.

In the beginning and for some considerable time, the liberal religious atmosphere was, naturally, marked, and decisive; especially so long as religious opposition continued and the group at the College felt itself on the defensive. As time went on, however, the liberalism of that atmosphere increased and the religiousness had less and less of a function to perform. By the time that the Muslim middle class was well established in the country, the new point of view taken for granted, and the new spirit more and more absorbed, Aligarh was patently both liberal and secular. Its staff became much like any other university staff, and its graduates went out into the bourgeois world not much concerned with religious questions; tolerant, rationalist, and carefree. This is typical of a developed bourgeoisie, and was the natural development from Sir Sayyid's position. Why a parallel development towards ameliorism⁸⁷ did not occur generally in the Indian Muslim middle class, but was arrested in its growth at an early stage and gradually replaced by an increasingly frenzied Islamic consciousness, is a problem to which we shall devote considerable attention in due course. Suffice it here to notice that the exceedingly liberal and increasingly irreligious atmosphere of Aligarh itself was eventually and suddenly arrested too. In 1937 the institution came under the domination of the Muslim League, and its insouciant liberalism was replaced by an almost hysterical religious enthusiasm, intolerant and anti-national. Aligarh was by 1941 the emotional centre of "Pakistan"; this marked a new phase in the University's life, and as such will receive separate treatment below.⁸⁸

From the beginning and almost throughout the liberal period there was a dearth of political consciousness. This can be traced to Sir Sayyid's influence, and, more exactly, to those conditions which produced the attitude also in him. Also, of course, the

87. For an explanation of this word, see below under "Definition of Terms".

88. See last section of the next chapter.

immediate dependence of the institution on the British government had its effect, particularly on the staff. Aligarh was famous for its pro-British gentility. In 1920, however, the nationalist fervour even in Aligarh resulted in the breaking off from the College of the nationalist element, and the founding of that admirable Islamic Community University (Jāmi'ah Milliyyah Islāmiyyah) of which more below. Again, during the 1930's the India-wide excitement of students reached Aligarh also, and in place of a loyal unconcern there appeared political and social agitation. This progressive tendency was soon superseded by the full-blown reactionary movement.

*A Note on the Part Played by Christian Missions
in Islamic Reform*

To a considerable extent, the modernisation of Islam was, in form, a reaction to the stimulus of Christian assault. Almost without exception the reformers wrote their expositions of the new Islam as apologetic answers to the criticism of the missionaries.

This is because, in essence, the Christian attack was this: that Islam failed to come up to the standard of humanitarianism and liberal idealism that Western bourgeois culture had produced (and Western Christianity had absorbed). In so far as the missions were successful, their attractiveness lay in this moral and humanitarian superiority: theology won few converts. One may suppose that a Christian missionary out of mediaeval Europe (or modern Abyssinia)—from an agricultural society to an agricultural society—could have claimed no appreciable influence. The Christian polemic therefore may be considered as a highly concentrated and specifically religious form of the general infiltration of Western bourgeois culture. As such, it was decidedly influential—among those who had ears to hear, namely, the Indian bourgeoisie. They alone saw the point of the missionary attack, and reacted by producing an Islam which Christian writers often claim is mostly Christian. The Muslim peasant on hearing the missionary either paid no attention, or else became Christian; but he did not produce a new "Christianised," i.e. bourgeois,

Islam ; just as he did not accept it when Sir Sayyid and the others produced one for him.⁸⁹

We are not questioning but that the Muslim reformers took a lot from modern Christianity and embodied it within Islam. We are simply contending that that part which they took was not a distinctively "Christian" part but the liberal-humanitarian-bourgeois part, the values of nineteenth-century Europe. These values were indeed a real part of Christianity then—just as they are a real part of Islam now. They were not inherent in either religion in its feudal days, neither in mediaeval Christianity, nor in eighteenth-century Indian Islam. It was this last fact that the missionaries, with much biting antagonism, were pointing out. They forgot that there had been societies in which Christianity also had not had a reasonable theology, a "this-worldly" attitude and criterion, a belief in progress, science, and culture, an ethics based on principles rather than on a code, a stress on the personality of its founder rather than on his cosmic function, an acquiescence in capitalist interest, a condemnation of slavery, a feminist programme—and so on. If one had pointed out those societies to the missionaries, they would no doubt have answered that the religion prevalent therein was not "real" Christianity—just as the modern Muslim asserts that early nineteenth-century Islam or modern village Islam is not the "real" Islam, or the modern missionary says that the new Westernised religion of the Aligarh School is not "really" Islam. The religious historian, of course, with less subtle distinctions, takes a religion as he finds it, and has no prejudice which keeps him from seeing that a religion, though it uses the same name, may be essentially different in different environments.

89. It is interesting that orthodox Indian Christians also undertook to write against Sir Sayyid Ahmad's rationalism and naturalism. See, for example, Rev. 'Imād al-Dīn, D.D., *Tanqīd al-Khayālāt* ; Lahore ; Sayyid 'Abd Allāh Āthim, *Nihāt i Islām i Ahmadiyah* and *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān Bahādūr Ki Chand Ghalatīyān. Qābil i I'tirād*. Thus the controversy between the old society and the new cut quite across religious (communal) divisions.

Chapter Two

THE MOVEMENT IN FAVOUR OF ISLAMIC CULTURE OF THE PAST

The religion of Sir Sayyid and his school, pruned as it was of all "faults," had remarkably little positive content. (That of Shibli and the other religious conservatives had more, simply because they had taken less away.) This slight religion was good enough for those it served; they were secure and carried to success in a system not basically their own, prospering without too much effort. Persons of this sort found eventually that they could get along without any religion at all, and formed the group of contented secularists typical of any well-running capitalist society. This group has been small in Indian Islam, for not many have had the necessary success.

There early arose writers who, accepting the form of the Aligarh Islam, supplied it with appropriate and substantial content. For them, Islam was depicted not only to harmonise with but to include the values of the new society. This move gradually attracted attention and approval; the ideas expressed found favour with an increasing body within the middle classes. They were consequently elaborated, expanded, and re-expressed, circulating more widely. The movement developed momentum from the beginning of the twentieth century until the First World War, and has dominated the middle-class scene from that time almost until the present. It usurped the place of honour previously occupied by Sir Sayyid's movement, and has been replaced in turn by the newer progressive movement only to a very limited extent. For a time recently it was itself in part being slowly transformed into a reactionary ideology.

The distinction between the former movement and the one we are at present to consider cannot be drawn sharply. The two blend into each other on their outskirts, and are sufficiently compatible that those on the inside of either usually do not

recognise the difference. None the less, the difference exists, and can be appreciated by observing the tendency of each at the centre of its development and not at the boundary. The new movement's rise coincided in time with the rise of a new class of men, those who were building up in India an indigenous capitalism, financed, it is true, largely by British capital but none the less competing with the already flourishing British industrialism. To a lesser extent it competed also with what other industry had been already established in India—the first and most successful Indian enterprises were set up and owned mainly by a few Hindus and Parsis. Furthermore, the whole economic system, after its early flare, was already beginning its breakdown. Before, the classes for whom Sir Sayyid catered had an expanding and joyous function to perform within and because of the imperialist framework. Now the bourgeoisie had its own creative task : to build up on its own initiative a native capitalism. This task soon became one of conflict with the imperialist system which was confining it mercilessly. Even for the bureaucracy, still immediately dependent upon the foreign power, and for the commercial classes, partly so, the supply of posts soon fell hopelessly behind the insistent demand. In other words, the prospect before a middle-class individual now was thoroughly different : whatever his training, he had to struggle bitterly for employment of any kind ; even if he succeeded in finding a position, his task was difficult, strenuous, and more or less unpromising. The chances of his disappointment grew increasingly high. Indian bourgeois society, though created by British imperialism, was presently ruthlessly suppressed by the same from expanding as a capitalist society must expand. It therefore reached in a generation or two the period of frustration which Western bourgeois society has reached only after a few centuries.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the men involved in this highly competitive and probably disappointing life turned to a religion with more substance than the Aligarh School offered. Sir Sayyid's Islam gave them permission to be bourgeois. They needed also a courage, confidence, and drive to be bourgeois; and, eventually, solace. These things the new religion gave.

Politics reflected, but also intensified, the situation. Nationalism grew and spread ; even those who had been late in starting in the new life were sooner or later affected. Just before the First World War, unrest spread, in pan-Islamic form, to include also the Muslim areas of the country. By 1920 it reached a peak of frenzy and, though the excitement has not been sustained at that level, pro-British sentiment was laid low and has hardly re-appeared. From the close of that war, if not before, the Muslim middle class has been, as the lower class always was, anti-British, at least emotionally. Latterly it has also been anti-Hindu—in a capitalist society every man is against his neighbour. (To this communal aspect we shall return.) The Muslim must stand on his own feet ; therefore his religion must give him pride and dominance.

Amīr 'Alī

The new movement, though it gathered momentum only with the new century, can be traced back as far as 1891, to the publication by Amīr 'Alī of the first of many editions of his *Spirit of Islam*.¹ We have already met the author diverging fourteen years earlier from Sir Sayyid and political subservience by founding a middle-class Muslim political organisation.² His religious position seems similar to that leader's, but there are differences that are of fundamental importance ; or at least they represent divergencies of fundamental importance, such as the political one just mentioned. The book discussed the life and the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad, altogether in the new style. It accepted all that for which the Aligarh School was contending, and differed by going on from there to the next stage. The new movement could not have existed without the previous one as its basis. Sir Sayyid, never aggressive except to attack corrupt tradition and misunderstandings, had written in his life of the Prophet an account of what Muḥammad was not. Amīr 'Alī presented what

1. Syed Ameer Ali, *The Life and Teachings of Mohammed, or the Spirit of Islam*, 1891. The latest edition, amplified and revised, is : Ameer Ali, Syed, *The Spirit of Islam*, 1922. The references given below are primarily to the first edition ; those to the last follow in each case in parentheses.

2. See above, p. 22

he was. Sir Sayyid had maintained that Islam was not inimical to liberal progress. Amīr 'Alī presented an Islam that is that progress.

Both works were published in England, and had a Western audience to some extent in view. Sir Sayyid's object was to prove to that audience that Islam is a respectable religion and should not be disdained and attacked. Amīr 'Alī is more ambitious, more confident: he hopes to attract Western seekers to Islam. He goes further, to state that Islam is already making headway in the West, in the form of Unitarianism and Theism, which are Islam without its discipline. The discipline is needed for "the common folk," for whom preaching by itself is not enough. "It is probable, however, that should the creed of the Arabian Prophet receive acceptance among the European communities, much of the rigid formalism which has been imparted to it by the lawyers of Central Asia and Irāk will have to be abandoned."³

But this in passing. The book "is primarily intended for the Indian Moslems."⁴ It gives them, first, a Prophet of whom they may well be proud, and on whom they can count as an infallible friend. Sir Sayyid had already begun an emphasis on Muḥammad, which was not found, of course, in the mediaeval literature that stressed his supernatural achievements and his prophetic function. But this new emphasis was slight in Sir Sayyid, and was hardly followed up. In the new movement it becomes almost central. There is intense interest in and devotion to Muḥammad as a mundane, human, being, but of perfect character. Amīr 'Alī presents him as all sweetness and light. There are long discourses on "the sweetness of disposition, the nobility of character"⁵; on "his singular elevation of mind, his extreme delicacy and refinement of feeling, his purity and truth."⁶ His humility is stressed, his care for the highest and lowest of his people, his constant visiting of the sick, his gentleness; also his perseverance, against the most bitter and discouraging odds. "A nature

3. Amīr 'Alī, *op. cit.*, preface, pp. viii-ix.

4. *ibid.*, preface, p. vii.

5. *ibid.*, p. 59 (1922 edition: p. 1, reading "gentleness" for "sweetness").

6. *ibid.*, p. 221 (p. 118).

so tender, and yet so heroic"⁷ commands the respect and the devoted admiration of the most modern, the most liberal of readers.

The book then goes on to survey the teachings of Muḥammad. There is a detailed and analysed apologetic for Islam on the scores of war, intolerance, women, slavery, literary and scientific spirit, rationalism, and democracy. On each, it is shown not that Islam is compatible with the modern ideas on these subjects, but that Islam's teaching, its spirit, is precisely those ideas. The missionaries had said that Islam degraded women; Sir Sayyid said that it did not; Amīr 'Alī said that Islam raised women from their previous degradation to a lofty pinnacle. Not only is slavery not inherent in Islam, but it was Muḥammad who taught those very principles which imply the abolition of slavery from human affairs. Socially, at a time when everywhere, and not least in Christendom, the masses were in hopeless subjection, Islam elaborated a political system fundamentally republican and stressing "the duties of sovereigns towards their subjects, and . . . the freedom and equality of the people."⁸

And so on; Islam was pictured as the first religion to proclaim all the virtues. By the 'twenties, it was ready to absorb also the new dynamism, explicitly replacing the former resignation. The 1922 edition contains an interesting new passage, with quotations from Muḥammad's reported sayings, which is an addition doubtless due to Iqbāl's influence: "The mind of this remarkable Teacher [Prophet Muḥammad] was, in its intellectualism and progressive ideals, essentially modern. Eternal 'striving' was in his teachings a necessity of human existence: 'Man cannot exist without constant effort'; 'the effort is from me, its fulfilment comes from God'. "⁹ The insertion of this idea in the later edition is an excellent example of how religion changes with the times, finding for support appropriate sayings that were simply overlooked before. Nevertheless, this particular case is nothing more than a concession to the new spirit. The

7. *ibid.*, p. 220 (p. 118).

8. *ibid.*, p. 425 (p. 288).

9. *ibid.*, 1922 edition, p. 121.

writer has not really adopted it, for it belongs essentially to the newer age which we shall study later, and he proceeds at once to tone down the idea and to revert to his own social atmosphere. For he adds, "The world, he taught, was a well-ordered Creation, regulated and guided by a Supreme Intelligence overshadowing the Universe—'Everything is pledged to its own time,' he declared."¹⁰ Another example of selection from among one's sources to divert the content of a religion, and this time a quite conscious selection, is his deliberate omission of objectionable passages from his quotation of Muḥammad's "Sermon on the Mount."¹¹

The new movement did not disregard the history of Islam as did the Aligarh School. The latter took Islam essentially as a system of thought, and took it straight from the Qur'an; now it was looked upon as a system of life and, as such, a system with a history. Taking a cue from Shiblī, the new writers turned to the past glory of Islam to find their support and content for their new religion. Islam meant for them not only such and such principles, but also that religion, even that community, which had produced a flourishing society in the past and presumably could do so again. Accordingly, Amīr 'Alī wrote a brilliant history, reprinted again and again, of the ancient and noble Muslim Arab civilisation.¹²

Even for the darker periods of Islamic history, he does not say, "This is not Islam," but, "This is what Islam becomes in a corrupt age," and hastens to look thence to Islam in a flourishing age. The same degeneration, he points out, occurred in Christianity: "Like rivers flowing through varied tracts, both these creeds have produced results in accordance with the nature of the soil through which they have found their course. The Mexican who

10. loc. cit.

11. Syed Ameer Ali, *Islam*, p. 48; *A Short History of the Saracens*, p. 17 (1927 ed.). The original is given in Ibn Hishām; an English translation will be found in Muir, *Life of Mahomet* (pp. 485 f., of the 1877 edition). The omissions in Amīr 'Alī's versions are indicated by dots, which implies that they are conscious and deliberate.

12. Ameer Ali, Syed, *A Short History of the Saracens*, 1899, Sixth impression (third edition), 1927.

castigates himself with cactus leaves, the idol-worshipping South American, the lower strata of Christian nations, are hardly in any sense Christians. There exists a wide gulf between them and the leaders of modern Christian thought. Islam, wherever it has found its way among culturably and progressive nations, has shown itself in complete accord with progressive tendencies, it has assisted civilisation, it has idealised religion.”¹³ He goes on to deplore the decadence of religion when practice gives way to the mockery of profession, the letter is followed rather than the spirit, and initiative is gone. In Islam, the need is for *ijtihad*—a technical device for personal discretion in legal interpretation. In other words, the Law must continue to develop. Herein the continuity of Islam is stressed ; its traditional Canon Law is not rejected, but must be modified—that is, it is accepted in principle. (Only in principle, of course ; so the history is retained only in principle ; naturally most of the unwelcome details of both are in fact ignored.)

This avowal that civilisation has been independent of religion, and that the latter has adapted itself to it, is the outcome of the historical approach. It is the new movement’s counterpart to the position held by the former movement, with its rational approach, that religion and culture are distinct and independent spheres ; or, in the language of the West (and Chirāgh ‘Alī), that Church and State have nothing to do with one another. None the less, recognition here is for the purpose of apologetics only. The historical independence of civilisation from religion never became an explicit tenet, and at other places in the same book Amīr ‘Alī contends the opposite doctrine. As the movement has developed since, and become more and more conscious of the glorious civilisation of Islam’s early centuries (also more and more conscious that Christendom’s present civilisation is not so glorious as was once supposed), it has held with increasing vigour that Islam inherently produces a high civilisation. The periods of low civilisation in its history, as the most recent one recedes into the past, are increasingly ignored.

13. *Spirit of Islam*, p. 283 (p. 180).

Amir 'Alī's own position was readily put in concert with the progressive evolutionary ideas of the best liberalism of the time. This becomes clearest in a small apologetic work on Islam which he published in 1906.¹⁴ In this, he speaks of the aspiration of religion as "the elevation of mankind,"¹⁵ and recognises "the gradual evolution of spiritual ideals."¹⁶ The picture of a future life, for instance, is, he says, crude and materialistic among Muslims of low degree, lofty and spiritual among advanced sections; and fasting is a useful discipline, especially "among coarser natures, for whom in reality it was intended."¹⁷ Such reflections of a lower stage of culture would in due course be outgrown. He had understood that society does progress and brings with it a higher religion, and imagined, as did his age, that all in good time the benefits would spread more and more to all its members.

His virtues are individualist ones. The fundamentals are purity of heart and a broad, deep charity. He sums up the spirit of Islam: "The primary aim of the new dispensation was to infuse or revive in the heart of humanity a living perception of truth in the common relations of life. 'The moral ideal of the new gospel,' to use the phraseology of an eminent writer, 'was set in the common sense of duty and the familiar instances of love'."¹⁸ The one case in which he leaves this individualism for a social vision is to include democracy within Islam, representing the rights of the people as one of Muḥammad's contributions to the world.

This is all good bourgeois thinking, and throughout he shows the limitations as well as the virtues of a capitalist society. His typically idealist and lawyer's mode of thought is neatly shown in this: "In the West, as in the East, the condition of the masses was so miserable as to defy description. They possessed no civil

14. Syed Ameer Ali, *Islam*.

15. *op. cit.*, preface, p. vi.

16. *ibid.*, p. 1.

17. *ibid.*, p. 21.

18. *Spirit of Islam*, p. 248 (pp. 152-3, reading "Dispensation" for 'dispensation').

rights or political privileges.”¹⁹ What they lacked more acutely was bread ; but throughout a discussion of the social implications and results of Islam, there is no reference to material conditions or economic problems. And Mazdak’s socialist movement in Zoroastrianism he calls the “climax of depravity.”²⁰ Amīr ‘Alī in actual life was thoroughly in favour of the new bourgeois order, but a pompous reactionary against nationalism and any still newer orders ; he was much appreciated by the official representatives of the British bourgeoisie. George (later Lord) Lloyd referred, in a letter to him, to “the work you have so long done in the interests of Islam in India and of Imperial interest at large”²¹ It is true that he later became a prominent Khilāfat leader.²² But this was an enthusiasm for Turkish imperialism, and he never allowed even it to make him an Indian nationalist.

His attitude to other religions is instructive, and contrasts with the tolerance of Sir Sayyid. His attitude to Buddhism, for instance, is exactly the old attitude of the bourgeois Christian to agricultural Islam, the attitude against which both he and Sir Sayyid were protesting : “Buddhism has no vitality as a system ; its religious life is represented now by the prayer-wheels of the Lamas.”²³ Similarly with the other religions of the world : he introduces his work on Islam with a review, quite unsympathetic, of their attainments. He gives a long and sad account of the sorry plight into which all the world had fallen prior to the advent of Muḥammad, and dwells on the failure of the other religions to effect any improvement. He points out particularly the degrada-

19. *ibid.*, p. 403 (p. 268).

20. *ibid.*, p. 18 (p. xxxvi). (The first edition, 1891, reads “depravation”).

21. ‘Memoirs of Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali,’ *Islamic Culture*, vol. VI, no. 3 (July 1932), p. 349 fn.

22. For the Khilāfat Movement, 1920, see below, Part II, chapter 2. It was anti-British agitation of Indian Muslims, supposedly to restore the Sultān-Khalīfah of Turkey. Amīr ‘Alī added a chapter on “Apostolic Succession” to the latest edition of his *Spirit of Islam*. But this was rather awkward as he himself was a member of the Shī‘ah minority in Islam whose chief distinction is that they do not recognise the official *Khalīfah* of the orthodox Muslims.

23. *Spirit of Islam*, 1891 ed., preface, p. viii.

tion of women in the various systems. Comments on Hinduism are definitely adverse.

The latest edition had much this same material, but with more detail. The section on Hinduism was fuller, more deprecatory; the tone was that of one who wondered how people could be so stupid and corrupt. Regarding Christianity, he had spoken in the first edition with some sympathy for "the religion of Jesus," though he showed it becoming perverted and amusingly corrupt during the first few centuries. Later, he had hardly a good word to say for it; and made use of all the historical, textual, and other criticism that he could lay his hands on to explain it away, to make it but a derivative from the sociological conditions of the time, from the mystery religions, and so on. Although in both editions he said elsewhere in the book that "excepting for the conception of the sonship of Jesus, there is no fundamental difference between Christianity and Islam,"²⁴ yet this was an isolated statement, and in general he was quite clear in both editions that Christianity is a religion by far inferior to Islam, and that anyone who adheres to it is rather stupid. Moreover, "the social and political conditions of the nations subject to the sway of Christianity was . . . deplorable."²⁵ In the Eastern Roman Empire the degradation was incredible, and reached its depth under Justinian, when a harlot was accepted as the queen. Liberty of thought was completely stamped out. He is rather fascinated by the moral horror of those times, seen mostly in the two aspects of intellectual narrowness and, above all, sexual impurity. "Humanity revolts from the accounts of the crimes which sully the annals of Christian Constantinople."²⁶

Whatever the defects of this writer, his chief concern and his chief contribution was to supply the new modernised Islam with modern and substantial content. By far the largest part of his work is devoted to a liberal and positive exposition of the Prophet, the religion and the history of Islam. And, looked at from within Islam, it is a marvellous achievement. It is scholarly, compre-

24. *ibid.*, p. 282 (p. 179).

25. *ibid.*, p. 33 (p. lii).

26. *ibid.*, p. 35 (p. liv).

hensive, generally sober, and altogether able to impress and to convince. Accepting the work of Aligarh as a foundation, and building upon it, it presents Islam as a religion grand, noble, and modern. (Sir Savyid's religion, and still Sir Ahmad Husayn's, is modern enough, but lacks grandeur ; there is nothing wrong with it, but nothing very noble either ; at least, nothing very ennobling) Old superstitions, vices, immaturities, all that is now inferior or outgrown, are mostly ignored, or, in so far as they are acknowledged, are swept away as subsequent accretions to the pure Islam, or are regarded as but the temporary reflections of a former day. The decadence of the age out of which the religion has just come is repudiated ; and all the trappings of that age are cast aside, but to be replaced with modern ones. The ideals, the approaches, the way of putting things, the religious spirit, all are now contemporary, relevant to the new, liberal age. And this new Islam is ready, not only to take a place in the modern world, but to take the supreme place. Christianity is challenged, attacked, even ridiculed. The Muslims who accepted his religion from these writings might hold his head high, even when confronting Western Europe. His religion, point by point, is proved the finest in the world—judged by the most modern standards. The Prophet whom he adores is the supreme character of all history. The Muslim might well be proud, and confident. The spirit of his religion, he found, is the highest liberal ideals, put here in contemporary and in glowing terms.

Naturally, the accurate historian, the careful orientalist, even the logician, could pick errors from the work and from the religious position that it embodies ; but that is not to our purpose. The *religious* charge that one can lay against it, and against all this movement, is its ethical poverty : it makes no demands upon the Muslim. It is beautiful, but inspires no activity. The Islam here presented is altogether admirable. But the function of a true religion, even a liberal would admit, is not only to be admired.

Descriptive Analysis of the Movement

We have devoted considerable space to an appreciation of Amīr 'Alī's exposition of Islam. This is not because his writings

have had a corresponding influence directly on Indian Muslims ; even the very large number of copies of his books sold indicates an audience for his views in Europe, and in other parts of the Islamic world, and not necessarily in India. He found many sympathetic readers in the liberal West interested in appreciating a religion not their own ; and in Muslim Egypt, his *Spirit of Islam* is the most widely quoted modern book on the religion.²⁷ But his importance for Indian Islam lies in his representative significance. Subsequent writers may have taken their attitudes directly from him, or from a similar set of circumstances. In any case, and in spite of individual differences, he expressed earlier than most, and it must be admitted, better than most, those ideas which have since dominated in the Muslim middle classes.

They have dominated especially within the central and lower middle classes. It is these people, of course, who need religion most—for whom religion has the greatest function to fulfil ; and who, in all spheres of living, have moved less far from the old traditional life. The upper bourgeoisie, who are more contented, speak English a good deal more, and can afford electric refrigerators, are satisfied with Sir Sayyid's attenuated faith, or with none at all. There are amelists everywhere, of course, and even agnostics, throughout the educated classes ; but the less successful sections have supplied the stronghold for the new bourgeois Islam. This is reflected to some extent in the fact that the ideas of the new movement have, since Amīr 'Alī's time, spread not through large constructive works, or systems elaborated by thinkers of eminence, but piecemeal. Principally through thousands of small pamphlets, each with a small circulation, through little lectures by little men, through local editorials, neighbourhood gatherings, small clubs and societies, through articles and discussion groups, the ideas have been circulated, reiterated, and to some extent developed. Also, they have been spread by organised religious societies : there have been many organisations, modelled more or less after Christian missionary societies simply trying "with modernized means, to perpetuate the hold of Islam

27. This statement is based on figures compiled by the present writer in a survey of modern Arabic Islamic literature.

on the minds of the people."²⁸ In the towns, this necessarily means the modernised bourgeois Islam, more or less mixed with the old traditional one. (A progressive and explicitly modernist movement is the Lahore Ahmadiyah, whose writings, though usually considered heretical, have made a very important contribution to working out and presenting the new ideas. Nor is it without significance that they constitute the most important Muslim missionary society to Christendom.)

Because of this situation, the material for studying liberal Islam is distributed through a vast number of petty sources—few of them comprehensive, or dealing with more than one aspect. We shall not, therefore, choose a few specific works for consideration, but approach the whole movement analytically, observing one element throughout and then another. Naturally, it must be borne in mind that the social background has been constantly developing. Accordingly, the religion has changed slightly in harmony with that development. But in so far as it has not changed sufficiently, its objective role in society has been transformed. Whereas it was once a progressive movement, it has passed through a passive, liberal phase, and has finally become conservative; it was ready recently even to become reactionary. For it was once actively in support of what were the new conditions. When they became established, it accepted and applauded them. Now, being internally the same as it was, it attempts to preserve, and even to recreate, those same conditions when the time has become ripe for still newer ones.

Moreover, the movement caters for an undefined group, ranging from the products of the new bourgeois culture to those vacillating sections who are affected by the culture to a great or to only the slightest degree. Because of this, one can find expressions of the ideas practically pure, or diluted to almost any extent. Even Amīr 'Alī contended that there might well be angels. At the other extreme some orthodox cleric can retain his hold in the towns by introducing into his viewpoint some smattering of liberalism which he has picked up indirectly.

28. Kraemer, "Islam in India To-day," *Moslem World*, vol. XXI, no. 2 (April 1931), p. 166.

We have already summed up the new movement by indicating that while Sir Sayyid contended for a religion that was liberal, these men contended for one that was liberalism. They succeeded moderately well in making out Islam to be liberalism, rationalism, tolerance, etc. ; but it must be noted that in so doing they produced a religion which is in fact less liberal, less rational, and less tolerant, than Sir Sayyid's. They have written glowing and laudatory accounts of the brighter aspects of Islamic history, to parade its liberalism ; but have produced almost no liberal scholarship to study that history impartially. They have quoted the Qur'ān and the Traditions voluminously to prove that Islam is rational, but have never subjected the Qur'ān and the Traditions to rational criticism. They have drawn a picture of their Prophet tolerant and teaching tolerance ; and have murdered someone who drew another picture.²⁹ Besides, now that they have such a fine religion and fine prophet themselves, they have increasing contempt for other religious systems, in which it is not difficult for them to pick faults.

Before we proceed to examine the elements of the new religion, it is perhaps illuminating to notice something of the light thrown by the evolving social situation in the background, during the movement's early days, as it is reflected in the mind of that Muslim bourgeois Khudā Bakhsh. He has already instructed us in the vicissitudes of his class ; and again to us his value lies in his being not a creative thinker. (Even in the world of scholarship he is remembered principally for his translations from the German orientlists.) In 1927 he published a new collection of essays³⁰ written during the preceding decade or so, and showing how that decade had affected a Muslim of his standing.

29. The *Rangilah Rasūl* incident : the book with this title was published in 1924, the author was murdered in 1929. The actual murder, of course, was committed by an illiterate person but demonstrations and the like on his behalf involved a large section of the "liberal" Muslim community. [It was not the author (he remained anonymous) but the publisher who was murdered. We do not agree with the author that *Rangilah Rasūl* was "another picture" of the Prophet : it painted the Prophet as a person given to sensuous pleasures (*rangilah*)—Publisher]

30. Khuda Bakhsh, *Studies : Indian and Islamic*, 1927.

On going through the book, one notices at once that the author has advanced far from the position that he held before the war. His spirit is still not especially religious (one finds no prominent note of either reverence or moral fervour in his writings), but from the placid scholar content with the broad outlines of his environment, he has become acutely aware of the problems that have become painfully critical in the new decade. Exclamation marks now abound. His previous aloof disdain of politics has given way to an energetic and partisan discussion of contemporary affairs. The developing crisis within that Indian capitalism which was encouraged during the war and was by now in conflict with the parent British imperilism, is mirrored in the professor's ardent nationalism. He who in 1912 was wholeheartedly loyal to the Empire and called for governmental repression of Indian "sedition," is now enthusiastically an Indian. "The European's claim to superiority is now a myth, . . . a relic of bygone days."³¹ "Let us stand on our own strength, fight our own battle."³² He speaks sympathetically of "political combination, strikes, non-co-operation"³³; uses phrases like ". . . the only way to bring the bureaucracy to its knees . . ."³⁴; and sees the programme of the new Muslim world as including "the eviction of Western capital by Muslim capital."³⁵ It is the days of the Hindu-Muslim alliance, and he expresses the enthusiasm for Indian unity: ". . . a wonderful phenomenon—undreamed of, unimagined, un hoped by the wildest hopes of man. . . . May the Muslim solidarity—for purposes Indian—be merged into the higher, nobler, Indian solidarity—mightily single, splendidly whole."³⁶ The whole article "The New World of Islam" shows a vigorous and optimistic zeal for the renaissance of Islam and Islamic society. The article "Mahatma Gandhi" is an idolisation of that man and his programme, and an unrestrained admiration for "the spirit of justice, honour, righteousness"³⁷ that he has infused.

31. *op. cit.*, p.30.

33. *ibid.*, p. 30.

35. *ibid.*, p. 31.

37. *ibid.*, p. 251.

32. *ibid.*, p. 36.

34. *ibid.*, p. 268.

36. *ibid.*, p. 32.

All these political attitudes have their counterpart in his cultural interests. Previously his ambition has been hardly more than for Muslims to become English gentlemen ; now he can say: "Orientals we are, and Orientals we must remain ; and European culture can never be for the majority of us more than an incidental and subsidiary acquisition."³⁸ The appearance of the new German orientalist review *Islamica*, which he cannot but praise, gives occasion for an impassioned plea for Easterners to undertake Eastern scholarship, not to remain for ever subservient to the West ; and in "Islamic Regeneration" he pleads for the revival of Arabic, Persian, and Hindustani education. This last item is of course the cultural aspect of Hindu-Muslim concurrence on the Non-Co-operation Movement.

But meanwhile the years were passing ; the nationalist revolt collapsed for the nonce, and the Muslim bourgeoisie was betaking itself to isolation and a defensive alliance with the British. The professor can then describe the Hindu-Muslim Pact as a sublime folly, denounce the Congress as a wanderer in rapturous dreams of unreality, and in his reaction despair of Islam and its culture in an independent India. "It is idle . . . to look to Swaraj for the cure of our present ills. And equally idle . . . to look to it for a reign of . . . righteousness. . . . It will divide Indian humanity into two great unequal halves—Heaven for one and Hell for the other."³⁹

This writer, but the mouthpiece of the Indian Muslim bourgeoisie, is with them wherever they go, he and his scholarship. Even in his temporary lapse with them into radicalism, he never got ahead of them. He still thought of idea as primary to matter ; he did not foresee a complete social transformation ; and his admiration for Gandhi was for Gandhi the bourgeois, who "re-bukes violence—condemns the revolutionary spirit—and seeks the success of his mission in peaceful progress, 'spiritual' conquest."⁴⁰

38. *ibid.*, p. 38.

39. *ibid.*, p. 270.

40. *ibid.*, p. 250.

From the troublous days of the war, the Khilāfat agitation, and the subsequent bitter disillusionment, the Muslim bourgeoisie emerged emotionally both anti-British and anti-Hindu, isolated, relatively weak, its individuals more or less frustrated. During the agitation, it had fanned its Islamic consciousness and pride, to fever heat. Afterwards thrown on its own resources, it felt that those resources needed strengthening as much as was possible.

One of the important elements in the new movement was its emphasis on Islam as a civilising force. This took several forms.

We have already alluded to the reconstruction in thought of the historic Islamic civilisation of Baghdad and other similar magnificent centres. This has gone on apace. Book after book, pamphlet after pamphlet, describe and eulogise the achievements of those times. Particular pride is taken in the efflorescence of learning. The devoted and lavish patronage of all arts and sciences at the brilliant courts of the rulers, the universal and excellent schools which flourished in conjunction with each mosque, the attainment of virtually complete literacy, the widespread establishment and care of public libraries at all the important centres, the world-famous universities of Basrah, Kufah, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordoba, are proudly remembered. The use of Arabic as the universal language of scholarship, even by Jews and Christians, is emphasised. The resuscitation and salvation of the Greek classics, and their study and development, is praised. Reference is made to the inclusion of women in the general pursuit of learning, and mention of women doctors practising medicine in Cordoba. Most important of all is the recognition of Muslim contributions to science, the development of the scientific method and the unparalleled achievements in one scientific and academic field after another. The Arabs made tremendous advances, both in pure learning and in practical discoveries—in mathematics (elaborating algebra, virtually inventing trigonometry, and so on for an imposing list), in astronomy, in chemistry, geography . . . and in industrial processes and appliances. . . . The successes attained by them, and now being increasingly

brought to light and pointed out, form a very brilliant part of the picture of mediaeval Islamic culture.

Another part of that picture is the exemplary tolerance. Christian physicians were welcomed and honoured at the princes' courts. Minorities were given every right. Philosophy flourished, and the most heretical ideas were held, expounded, and discussed with the utmost freedom.

The poor and destitute were cared for most magnanimously. Hospitals abounded, even travelling dispensaries to attend to the outlying districts. The state supported orphanages. The meanest subject had access to the ruler for complaint. The highest, even the *khalifah* ("Caliph") himself, was subject to the same law, on the same terms, as was everyone.

The streets of Cordoba were well paved, and lighted at night by public lamps. Hot baths were customary, and but one item in the remarkable refinement of the times. Irrigation was advanced to an admirable degree. Industry of all kinds flourished. Ship-building, steel-tempering (as of the covetable Toledo blades), leather-working, cloth-manufacturing, cattle-breeding, . . . the list of attainments is admirably long.

In art, and especially architecture, the flowering of Muslim culture is world-famous and in many of its aspects has never been excelled. Its achievements are held up for esteem, and the world's praises of them are gathered and satisfyingly read.

Along such lines as these—and they can be much protracted—the movement instils pride for the religion of Islam. As fast as European scholars uncover the history of the period, and endeavour to give it due place in the story of civilisation and progress, the highlights are displayed for the advantage of Islam. There is even some original research being done; this is naturally limited, though increasing. Anything admirable that is uncovered is immediately claimed as "ours"; the proprietary sense is quite unabashed. A recent reviewer writes: "The interest of Muslim Indians in *their lost heritage* in the Iberian Peninsula has been on the increase of late, and in recent years many books, original compilations as well as translations, have appeared on the

subject."⁴¹

Another way of feeding the feeling of esteem, nurtured by this glorification of the Muslim part, is to stress the contrast between it and the contemporary Europe. The zenith of Islam's civilisation, especially in the Near and Middle East, coincided in time with the nadir of Christendom's. The Dark Ages of Europe, till the eleventh or twelfth century, offer abundant material to anyone interested in showing that while the Muslims lived in splendour and enlightenment, Christians in Europe wallowed in abysmal crudity and superstitious ignorance. The effect is considerably heightened in pointing out that Muslims not only took hot baths and taught geography by the use of globes, but did so at a time when the West neither washed nor went to school and thought that the earth was flat.

We have said that these attitudes are being developed by all sorts of men, ranging from exact and sober historians to irresponsible and rather silly proponents of Islamic glory. An example of the former is the "Shiblī Academy" at Azamgarh, producing works of historical scholarship on the period ; of the latter, a small-town lecturer who eulogises Islamic learning and says of Islamic architecture that "while all Arab and Moghal buildings are spacious and commodious, those unearthed at Texilla are very small. The rooms there are very very small. It is said that at Pompeii too the houses are small and the streets narrow."⁴²

The next method of stressing the civilising power of Islam is that of stating that when Europe finally did become civilised, it did so by borrowing the culture of the Muslims. The contribution of the Islamic world to the Renaissance, and hence to all subsequent Western development, is reiterated. The Arabs developed the experimental method, and passed it on, through Spain, to Europe ; so that the whole of science, the pride and the foundation of the modern West, is a contribution of Islam to the world ; it is almost implied that all science may properly be considered

41. From an unsigned book-review (of one such work) in *Islamic Culture*, vol XV, no. 1 (Jan. 1941), p. 136 Italics ours.

42. Nafis-ud-Din Ahmed, *Islam and World Civilization*, p. 17.

Muslim. Apart from science itself, as a method and principle—apart also from the classical learning of the Greeks, which reached the West through Arab hands—there were the specific scientific and academic achievements of the Muslims, to which we have already alluded, and which were handed on to Europe. There is ample material to fill many pamphlets on the contribution of Arabic learning to renaissant Europe, as Western orientalist are discovering and Indian Muslims are quoting. For example, two particular discoveries that are said to have been fundamental to the new order in the West, gunpowder and the mariner's compass, the Muslims claim—and through the latter, an Islamic part in the discovery of America. The tremendous impetus which the Crusades gave to progress in the West, by opening the eyes and minds of Europeans to the superior civilisation that they visited, is emphasised. And the fact is stressed that Western learning can be directly traced to the stimulus of Arabic learning, particularly through the universities in Spain. Roger Bacon, formerly imagined as the European originator of science, is now seen, and more truly, as but an important apostle of Muslim learning to Christendom ; and Christians are said to have attacked him as a "Muhammadan" for his attitude to learning. "The first step taken by the European nations towards scientific advancement was to acquire the learning of the Muslim world."⁴³

But the contribution of Islam to modern Europe was not confined to science and scholarship. It can be claimed in almost all fields. For Europe before the Crusades was benighted and corrupt. Islam was flourishing. Then later Europe flourished ; it has finally, and gradually, become tolerant, prosperous, democratic, slave-free, striving after an international law—and so on ; has, in other words, adopted the spirit of the old Islamic civilisation. "The most salient features of western civilisation are but the replica of our culture."⁴⁴ More strongly (but this is extreme) : "All progress in learning, culture and civilization from the seventh century to the present times owes itself directly or indirectly to

43. *Qur-aan and Science*, p. 43.

44. Nafis-ud-Din Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

the mind of the Founder of Islam.”⁴⁵ The argument is sometimes used that the superiority of Islam over Christianity as a religion is glaringly shown ; for during the Middle Ages, religion flourished in both communities, yet that was when Islamic civilisation also flourished, while Christendom showed no vitality. As long as the Christian religion reigned supreme, Europe was culturally backward ; it is only as Europe has gradually shed her religion, or relegated it to less and less decisive aspects of life, that she has forged ahead so spectacularly. The Islamic world, on the other hand, has retrogressed since gradually forsaking the “true tenets” of Islam.

Still another, though minor, way of suggesting the Islamic contribution to Western culture, is that of enumerating the Arabic vocabulary extant in, for instance, English : “Vega,” “alcohol,” “muslin,” “tariff,” “checkmate.” . . .

Occasionally, though far less often, the contribution of Islamic culture to India is glorified.

A different form through which the idea of Islam as a civilising force may be expressed occurs in the presentation of the rapid and complete social transformation of Arabia wrought by the Prophet Muḥammad in the seventh century. Arabia just before his advent is painted in the most lurid colours imaginable. The Arabs, it is said, were sunk in vice of every kind : adultery, unrestrained drinking, gambling, repulsive idoltary, animism, worldliness (they did not believe in an after-life), unlimited polygamy, treachery, internecine tribalism, neglect of orphans and widows, mistreatment of slaves, and the exposure of girl babies. Muḥammad, by the preaching of his God-given religion, metamorphosed this society into one virtually ideal—whose members were united, in devotion to the world’s supreme cause, were sober, chaste, lofty, generous, humane, and altogether virtuous. Occasionally (as with Amlr ‘Alī), the consideration of the incredibly deplorable state of affairs at Muḥammad’s advent is extended to include the whole world ; and then to the new Muslims’ fine qualities is added that of their zealously fulfilling

the mission of launching forth to save the world, proclaiming the new and so powerful gospel. The astonishing speed with which Islam did spread over the world is another point calling for esteem.

One aspect of Islam in relation to civilisation which has received special and reiterated attention is the relation between the religion and science. We have already noticed the great stress that is laid on the birth and early development of science in the early Muslim civilisation. But the argument is pursued a good deal further ; these historical considerations are imposingly buttressed by new interpretations of the Qur'ān and a new selection of the orthodox Traditions. The Qur'ānic approach offers two methods. The first is simple rationalisation : to read into Qur'ānic texts modern scientific meanings. For instance, when Muḥammad in his revelation proclaimed to recalcitrants that on the Day of Judgement one's very hands and feet would bear testimony against one, this is taken as a prescience of the thumb-print system ; or his statement that no alteration would be found in the ways of God is taken to refer to the unchangeable laws of nature which underlie (nineteenth-century) science. This sort of thing, common to most modern religions, obviously has no other limits than those imposed by the believer's ingenuity and credulity. It ranges from the most fantastic and elaborated notions to fairly sober and restrained interpretations.

Somewhat less irresponsible is the other method of pressing the Qur'ān into the service of science : which is to quote verses that show its advocacy of learning in general, and, by one's using more or less imagination, of the scientific method in particular. This advocacy is derived from the happy fact that Muḥammad, in debating about God with the sceptical and scoffing Arabs of his time, made extensive use of the teleological argument—the argument from design. He repeatedly urged his hearers to ponder the marvellous works of nature for in these works was ample evidence of a divine creator and sustainer, and a divine providence for men for which they should be grateful. Any number of verses recommending the observation of nature can therefore be picked out ; and these verses recently were quoted as often as

any others in the Qur'ān, to prove that Islam is not inimical to science, but rather would foster it. For instance : "Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are signs for men of understanding—Men who think on Allah . . . and attentively consider the creation. . . ."46

More straightforward are the Traditions on learning. From the almost inexhaustible supply of the accepted sayings of Muḥammad, a very convincing selection can be made to show acquisition of learning as one of the first duties of the Muslim. "Seek knowledge, even though it be in China" ; "The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr" ; "an hour spent in study is more valuable than a year of prayer." Such traditions, with many more of similar purport, make a persuasive display in the case for Islam's scholarliness. Traditions (the entire mass of which is far beyond the layman's grasp) are quoted entirely *ad libitum*, and usually without reference ; selections from the whole are made on no critical principle whatever, but purely on an apologetic basis. For this reason the modern bourgeois who meets only the selected ones, and has no idea of the remainder, forms for himself an impression of Islam that is entirely and without subterfuge on his part in consonance with the liberalism which he unconsciously professes. It must be remembered, of course, that Traditions such as the above are quoted, explicitly and implicitly, not to urge the Muslims themselves to learning because they recognise Islam as determinative, but to urge them to devote themselves to Islam since they recognise learning as valuable.

That Islam is *par excellence* the religion of civilisation (conceived in liberal terms), is, then, one of the two most fundamental attitudes of the movement that we are considering. The other is the conviction that Muḥammad is the supreme personality of all time. "To whatever traits of human virtue we look, we find that the Prophet Mohammad possessed all of them in the highest degree; and was the most ideal figure that the world

has produced.”⁴⁷ (In passing, we might note that this sentence gives away the author’s—and the movement’s—attitude: one looks first at the virtues, then at Muḥammad; not *vice versa*.) The emphasis is on Muḥammad as a person, a human being of commanding excellence, the embodiment of the liberal-bourgeois virtues; and he becomes the object of a devotion, virtually an adoration, that can hardly be exaggerated.

The importance of the Prophet in this movement is enormous. It is something new in modern Islam, which the movement itself has introduced. Rather it has reintroduced it; it finds strong historical backing in the traditional *Ṣūfī* movement (Islamic mysticism). Probably more lives of Muḥammad appeared in every one of the years between the two world wars, than in any one of the centuries between the twelfth and the nineteenth. In the Punjab, a movement actually called the “*Sīrat*”⁴⁸ Movement” was started in the 1920’s to distribute pamphlets, sermons, and the like, about Muḥammad, and has been remarkably successful among the middle classes. It is, however, but one aspect of the general trend which might itself well be termed a *sīrah* movement. Another aspect is the increasing popularity and importance among the bourgeoisie of the festival celebrating Muḥammad’s birthday. Further, Muslims will allow attacks on Allah: there are atheists and atheistic publications, and rationalist societies; but to disparage Muḥammad will provoke from even the most “liberal” sections of the community a fanaticism of blazing vehemence.

We have already indicated something of the nature of Muḥammad who is presented. One of the aspects that are stressed is his civilising effect on the Arabians. As early as 1905, Shaykh Qidwā’ī read a paper in London on the “miracle” of Muḥammad, which he said was “the political, social, mental, moral and theological transformation effected by him in Arabia.”⁴⁹

The above suggests another trend, that away from the mira-

47. Jafri, *Flashlights on Islam*, p. 38.

48. *Sīrah, sirat*: the story of the Prophet’s life.

49. Kidwāī, *The Miracle of Muḥammad*, p. 25.

culous. The "miracle" of Muḥammad is the fact that, being but a man, he could attain such excellence. The above speaker had not effected the transition to the new attitude unreservedly. He presented Muḥammad as Carlyle's hero-prophet, not supernatural but natural and therefore supremely great, and explicitly said that miraculous "feats have also been attributed to Muḥammad, but, as he very sensibly refused to make wonder-working the criterion of truth, Muslims do not attach great importance to stories of miraculous performances by him."⁵⁰ But a further reason that he assigns is curious, namely, that there has been an abundance of miracle-working throughout Islamic history since, and therefore it is not especially noteworthy in the Prophet. Similarly, in the mass of pamphlets, lectures, and references about Muḥammad's life, all sorts can be found, either quite free from the supernatural element or with a less or greater degree of it. On the whole, however, the movement is definitely one of enthusiasm for a perfect *person*. Further, the approach is bourgeois, and therefore naturalist.

Muḥammad is said to have been beloved, charitable, frugal, generous, gentle, honest, humble, lenient, a lover of children, modest, pure, steadfast, and successful. Sometimes these virtues are merely listed, with more or less elaboration; sometimes they are illustrated from episodes in his life. In the former case, the sentences are weighed with superlatives rather than with arguments. But it is not necessary to leave the contentions without evidence; again the classical Traditions and Biographies are ready to supply accounts and incidents that make the personality live. For instance, for his lenience and peerless forgiveness of enemies, there is the story of his conquest of Makkah (Mecca), in which he proclaimed a general amnesty for his sworn and bitter foes. His frugality and humility are shown repeatedly in instances recounted of his behaviour after he became supreme ruler of Madinah. His steadfastness is clear to all the world from his perseverance from the beginning of his mission during the early years of persecution. And so on. . . . Again it must

be pointed out that the selection of incidents is neither critical nor hortative, but laudatory; the object is to show that Muḥammad was the personification of all that the persons addressed already consider valuable. Sometimes this is all summed up in the one attitude of love: "What was the keynote of his life? It was nothing but love: love of God; love of mankind; . . . love of children; love of the gentler sex; love of friends; love of foe. . . ." ⁵¹

It is clear that Muḥammad is credited with every virtue that the particular writers or lecturers can think of. Often it is quite instructive to notice what are the virtues that they can think of, and what they cannot. Such an investigation usually shows the normal limitations of the bourgeois ideology. The stress on perseverance under adversity, on industry, frugality, and seriousness, is typical of an early-capitalist society. One writer even goes so far as to say puritanically that Muḥammad had "no interest, even as a child, in frivolous pursuits". ⁵² More general is that the entire axiology may be subsumed under the liberal conception of duty: namely, to accomplish one's own task well, and to be considerate, even loving, in one's incidental relations with other individuals, especially those who are unfortunate. Less attention is paid to Muḥammad's intelligence, his acute and unscrupulous political sagacity, and especially his brilliantly aligning himself with and dynamically leading the deep sociological forces which were already stirring in the society about him. A bourgeois can hardly recognise that to perform a task well is less virtuous than to choose a good task; and that to treat one's immediate fellow-beings with sympathy may be less important than to support those trends which will lead to their standing less in need of sympathy. One's relation to society *in toto* is often more significant than that to one's immediate neighbours.

In any case, such is Muḥammad as he has been conceived and admired by the modern Muslim middle class. The conception is one of liberal excellence. What function does it fulfil?

51. Sarwar, *Translation of the Holy Qur-ān*, p. lvi.

52. Kidwai, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

A parallel arises, it would seem, in every liberal society. A corresponding interest in Jesus in the recent West is evident: an unprecedented multitude of lives of Jesus has appeared ; with decreasing supernaturalism, with more and more interest in his personality and his virtues and less in his theological function. The Jesus of History replaced, in liberal circles, the Christ ; and the qualities ascribed to him are so similar to those now ascribed to Muhammad, that Christian missionaries are wont to say that the modern character of the latter has been painted "in colours drawn from a Christian paint-box".⁵³ Why this modern religious interest in a person ? It is no exaggeration to say that liberal religion is more interested in a person than it is in God.

The answer is partly that capitalist society is pre-eminently individualist. Even a religion does not, in general, answer questions that do not arise. May the relative neglect of God not reflect the fact that the liberal does not approach his society, his environment, synthetically ? He is interested in persons one by one, in the way that life confronts segregate individuals, but not in the total effect—not in the structure which relates all the members of society to each other. That structure (if anything can be given that name, which includes processes so chaotic as the competition at the basis of capitalism) is haphazard and beneath the surface, and represents relations that are utterly unco-ordinated, and, in the aggregate, unconscious. Even the class structure becomes rigid only after capitalism has ceased to expand ; and it never becomes explicit. Deliberately to raise the form of society to the surface, to discover its nature, is, in the first place, difficult ; almost no capitalist understands how capitalism works, and the correct analysis of it appeared late on the scene. In the second place, it is uncaptalist ; for to know the form is at once to criticise it, as both inhuman and stupid. Capitalist society is viewed as a total entity, therefore, only from the outside ; for instance, from a socialist viewpoint. Within liberalism, questions as to the whole do not arise ; concern is only with each individual as a part. (Compare the chaotic

53. W. Wilson Cash, *The Moslem World in Revolution*, p. 87.

departmentalisation of science in bourgeois society?") The liberal concerns himself primarily with better treatment for each person, but not with the inhumanity and irrationality of the whole affair. In religious terms, he endeavours to be as steadfast, and as charitable and loving, a person as is possible ; but he does not much consider what is the will of an *all-loving* and *all-wise* God.

One can follow the liberal Muhammad (or Jesus) within a capitalist society ; but one can hardly obey God without working to replace that society.

Concerning the religious emphasis on personality, the above argument, with any truth it may contain, is seconded by various other factors. To one of them we have alluded already, in considering Sir Sayyid Ahmad's rejection of the Canon Law : that capitalist society is too fluid and too diverse for any fixed code or system of morals. The middle class keeps facing so many new problems that it must be guided not by a set of answers, but by a set of principles, or better still a spirit, according to which they may be answered. The new inadequacy of former elaborations and applications of a religion's teaching readily explains why the modern, in so far as he retains his religion, will go back to its origins in order to work out something less irrelevant to his life. Hence the "back to the Qur'ān" and "back to the Prophet" cries ; undoubtedly part of the revived interest in Muhammad's life and character is due to this. And not only is the interest in his teaching. At first, the simple teaching of any prophet, stripped of all subsequent amplifications, accretions and now-outworn applications, is such a relief in the new society that for a time it serves quite well. But presently it is realised that even this is becoming inadequate and irrelevant : the new situations in which the liberal finds himself are different enough from those of seventh-century Arabia (or in the cases of other creeds, when- and wherever it was that the founder or founders promulgated the religion), that he finds the explicit enunciations of the Prophet giving no answers, or even the wrong answers, to his modern problems, as well as giving answers to problems which he does not face at all. Therefore he is driven back not only from

a religious law to the Prophet's teachings on which it was founded, but again from those teachings to the spirit in which they were taught.

It is inevitable that sooner or later the liberals recognise, consciously or unconsciously, that the situations in their life, however apparently similar in their superficial form to those in their Prophet's life, are complicated and conditioned by so many new and utterly divergent factors, that they demand new answers. This leads, *inter alia*, to a study of the sociological and other backgrounds of the Prophet's time, in an effort to understand in just what respects the old situations were different from the new; hence the appearance among the wise of historical criticism. The final stage of this process is when the modern ceases altogether to regulate—and even to think that he is regulating—his life on ancient patterns. If he stay religious, his religion has at most a continuity connection with any of the historical faiths; or else reverts to a “neo-orthodoxy” of some type. But before this point is reached, there is a period in which he devotes himself not to the answers which his prophet gave to problems, but to the “spirit” in which those answers were given. Hence the fervent interest in the life, the personality, the character, the qualities and virtues, the attitudes, of, in this case, Muḥammad.

This is part of the new attitude to the Prophet; but there is yet a good deal more. The above analysis, though needing to be carried somewhat less far, applies also to the Aligarh movement. It is not sufficient to account for the remarkable emotional enthusiasm which during its later stages the new movement has developed for Muḥammad. He plays a very important part in the emotional lives of the classes concerned, as a companion, who can be relied upon at all times for friendship, sympathy, and stimulation, and also upon whom friendship and devotion can be bestowed. This phenomenon must be considered in the context of a predominantly male society where free and balanced heterosexual emotional companionship is rare. But it must also be noted that it flourishes in a capitalist society based on competition, where every man's hand is against his neighbour; where one can get a job only by depriving someone else of it, and co-

operation, the realist basis of friendship, is outlawed. When the first exuberant wave of Indian middle-class expansion, carrying Sir Sayyid Ahmad and his whole movement to a happy success, had subsided with the closing years of the nineteenth century, there came a period of Indian industrial development, during which very few persons, especially Muslims, attained prosperity easily; those who succeeded did so by their own initiative and hard work, fighting their way in opposition to fairly fierce competition; and presently even this period gave way to one not of development but of stagnation, which meant for the generality of the middle class a life of bitter struggle, disappointment, frustration, and rigid confinement within a system far too small for them. In this last situation Muḥammad as a friend found many devotees.

This was the more so, that the friendship made no demands upon the enthusiast. We have noticed before of this whole movement that it offers comfort and strength without asking anything in return. Those who are too modern, too intelligent, or too busy, to adhere to the traditional code or even the Qur'ān; too lax to devote themselves to God, or to socialism; can derive great emotional and religious satisfaction from their "love of the Prophet". This phrase stirs them, but actually it has little meaning, pragmatically. They dislike the orthodox theological colleges, which at least take their religion seriously and propose to do something about it, and they dislike also the modern sects which try in one way or another to apply the commands of Islam to modern life, on the grounds that both these do not sufficiently "honour the Prophet".

Besides these two major emphases of the movement, on Islamic civilisation and on Muḥammad, there are a few minor aspects which attract a varying degree of attention to themselves. One worth noticing is a tendency ostensibly toward what might well be termed deism. It is a modern elaboration of a doctrine traditional in Islam, that Islam is the natural religion. Muḥammad himself thought of his mission as not to introduce something new, now first revealed, but to revive among the Arabs the natural religion which other prophets had preached to other

nations. We have already noted his appeal to the world of nature for evidence of the truth that he was proclaiming. And every child is said to be born a Muslim, and to deviate from this position only in so far as he is misled. The argument is readily developed from the conception of *Islam* as meaning submission to God, or obedience to His unalterable will or law. For when God is thought of as Creator and Ruler of the universe, and the universe, thanks to science, is thought of as obeying a fixed system of natural laws, then one arrives at the conclusion that Islam is obedience to the laws of nature. The contention can be very attractively put ; as it is, for instance, by Sayyid Abu l-A'lā Mawdūdī, one of the leading Muslim divines of India to-day, All the universe, he says, in following out the laws of its creation, is submitting to God and carrying out "Islam". "The sun, the moon and the stars are thus all 'Muslims,' "54 and even an atheist is perforce a Muslim in respect of his bodily organs and the law of his own development. But in so far as man has free will and choice, in his rational life, he may or may not choose to live in accordance with the laws of God. If he does so choose, his life is perfect. "This is Islam, the natural religion of man, not associated with any people or country. In any age, in any country, among any people, God-knowing and truth-loving men believed and lived this very religion. They were all Muslims, whether or not was this religion termed in their language 'Islam.' "55 This is a most promising attitude, and might lead far if encouraged. One or two writers have spoken well of developing personality to the full, and of carefully avoiding anything that would thwart that natural development.

Of course, the conception is based, as was European deism, upon an early idea of science and scientific laws. No notice is taken of recent advances in science, or modern interpretations of the meaning of "laws" of nature ; little notice even of evolution. Natural laws are here considered to be unchanging and unchangeable, and are thought of as imposed from without, as

54. Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, p. 3.

55. *ibid.*, pp. 20-1.

something which nature obeys ; a decree as to how the world must function rather than a description of how it does. It takes only the slightest confusion of thought for advocates of this view to imagine that society is static and unchanging, and that its laws are to be obeyed, not criticised. They are apt to imagine, as does this writer, that "it is God Who has elevated that king to his high position,"⁵⁶ and to assume that to the government allegiance is "naturally" due. The whole tendency of their attitude is to accept the *status quo*—as was the case with deism : "whatever is, is right."

However, another important point to notice about this school of those who claim Islam to be the Religion of Nature is that they do not really mean it. They do not really want the name and reputation of Islam to be attached to actual naturalism ; they put their case in hopes that the now attractive name and reputation of naturalism may be attached to Islam. They must not emphasise too strongly that Islam means living in conformity with the laws of nature, lest some young braves should push on to declare that living in conformity with the laws of nature is Islam. They certainly do not intend that ; their point is simply to recommend Islam, the Islam that they have known, and they do so by ascribing to it the qualities which they know that their hearers value. That any young man should study natural science, sociology, psychology, and should substitute his findings for the traditions of Islam, horrifies them. That is, as a matter of fact, precisely the tendency that they, as advocates of Islam, are attempting to combat. They do not want Islam replaced by naturalism ; and their method of avoiding it is to say that Islam already is naturalism. (The Aligarh School said that it was naturalist.) Like the whole movement that they represent, they applaud Islam, and portray it as much to be applauded ; but they do not intend that anything be done about it.

It is significant that the writer from whom we have quoted, whose presentation of the deist case is the most beautiful and convincing that has appeared, is one of the most reactionary

leaders, socially and religiously, of those who have a following among the Muslim youth. The presentation is the first chapter of a treatise whose subsequent chapters are devoted to leading the young middle-class Muslim, once he has been won over by this liberal beginning, back to the orthodoxy and orthopraxy⁵⁷ of traditional Islam. We shall return to this thinker.

An aspect of Islam, to which much attention has been paid ever since the Christian missionaries began their very caustic criticism, is the position of women. The Aligarh School on the whole accepted the criticism and the moral standard on which it is based, and worked to purge Islam of its relegating women to an inferior status. They claimed that "true" Islam does not deny women a high position. The new movement, characteristically, claims that Islam positively does give women the highest position possible. But in this point the claim has been purely verbal; instead of accepting the liberal values and incorporating them within Islam, as was their usual policy, the exponents of the movement have hardly relented as regards seclusion (*pardah*), and have refused to budge on subordination. They have refused to be liberal, and have answered the attacks by protesting that the actual position of women in (traditional) Islam is the best. Their hyperbolic protestations indicate that they have acquired the feeling that to give a high place to women is some sort of virtue, and as such they must claim it for their Prophet. But that is as far as their concession will go, and they resolutely refuse to put the feeling into practice.

The claim of Islamic supremacy in the feminist field is put baldly. "Muhammad, the greatest benefactor of womankind the world has ever produced"⁵⁸—"No other religion gave woman the status she enjoys under Islam"⁵⁹—Islam gives women "rights and privileges which no other social or religious system allows them."⁶⁰—"It may sound as a hyperbole to state that Muslim

57. For an explanation of this word, see below under "Definition of Terms".

58. Zaidi, *Position of Woman Under Islam*, p. 13.

59. Nafis-ud-Din Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

60. Abdul Waheed, *The Spirit of Islamic Culture*, p. 5.

women by their personal law on the whole enjoy a greater degree of personal freedom than a woman of any other community. But this is none the less true."⁶¹ Such grandiose assertions are sometimes validated only by emphasis and reiteration, sometimes by bits of "evidence"—of which the favourite one is the fact, repeated and gloried over a thousand times, that Islamic law allows a woman to hold property, and awards her as a daughter one-half the share of each son in the estate left at death by a father. Other bits are more fatuous, though they too show the resentment which is at the base of this type of defence: "Above all Islam gives her [sc. woman] the right to be known by her own personal name as Khadija and Aisha, Fatimah and Zainab, instead of Miss Jones and Mrs. James."⁶² The position of woman in Arabia before Islam is painted as exceedingly woebegone; and the raising of her by Muḥammad from that to the position that she had had in traditional Islam is used as an argument for his service to women; hence Islam is good to women. In any case, whatever the form of the arguments, their force is due solely to a logical circle; for the unconscious premiss in each case, held with intense emotional conviction, is that the Islamic custom is right and good, and that alternatives are indecent.

One of the methods used to inculcate the superiority of Islam in this, as in other regards, is to picture the modern West as a den of unrelieved vice. It is supposed that there exists in Europe and America a situation of total moral depravity, sexual perversity, rank libertinism, wrecked marriages, a *de facto* polygamy, and general foulness from which one might well revert. The Islamic writers grasp with avidity at the not meagre supply of sorry material out of which such a picture can be composed; and occasionally enliven their writings with a Western quotation to the purpose; for instance, from the strictures on women of the gloomy Schopenhauer. One argument is used with surprising frequency, that polygamy is natural and at least obviates the prostitution of Western countries. This is, of course, palpably ridiculous: prostitutes of Lahore are not all Hindu and Sikh;

61. Jafri, op. cit., pp. 55-6.

62. Abdul Waheed, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

nor are their clients.

Shaykh M.H. Qidwā'i, a leading Khilafatist, published during Khilāfat days a pamphlet on "Polygamy,"⁶³ to defend the traditional Muslim position and to attack the West as hopelessly corrupt and iniquitous in this regard. The pamphlet is quite bitter, and is interesting as being one of the few Muslim polemics in English which repay in kind Christian antagonism to and biting denunciation of Islam. "Woman as woman owes not a single right, not a single privilege to Christ. It would not have mattered to women if he had never been born. Perhaps it would have been better for them."⁶⁴ He marshals argument after argument, untiringly and with some skill, to defend Islam on polygamy—sometimes defending polygamy itself, but more often recognising monogamy as something to be valued though not imposed.

This last brings us to a point of considerable importance, namely, that in spite of all the refusal to admit openly that the traditional Islamic position could be improved, there is none the less some slight progress beneath the surface. An inevitable shift of position, however small and however far from explicit, can be detected in some of the discussions, evinced not in open retreats, but in the attitudes, the methods of defence, and the points chosen to be defended. Indeed, in rare cases, there is an open call to shift. The one instance in which Amīr 'Alī abandoned his policy of pure apologetics and glorification of Islam, for one of exhortation—the one time that he actually asked the Muslims to *do* something, as well as to be proud—was about polygamy. He termed it in certain ages inevitable, but to-day "an unendurable evil"⁶⁵; "it is earnestly to be hoped that, before long, a general synod of Moslem doctors will authoritatively declare that polygamy, like slavery, is abhorrent to the laws of Islam."⁶⁶ This was written during the early days of the movement, when it was fulfilling a progressive function; not many writers have been so

63. Kidwai, *Polygamy*.

64. op. cit., p. 2.

65. Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 316 (p. 222).

66. *ibid.*, pp. 330-1 (p. 232). (The 1891 edition reads: "that before long a," without commas.)

outspoken, and certainly not of late. What has in fact happened is not the authoritative declaration for which he hoped, but a tacit shift from a defence of the full orthodoxy to a defence of certain parts of it. Polygamy is less defended to-day than is seclusion (*pardah*). Some writers, as Qidwā'i above, defend it in principle, while recognising in fact that it is not excellent. Many defend the Qur'ānic permission, but lay great stress on the accompanying injunction for impartial justice—so much stress, at times, that the permission to have four wives is explicitly considered to be so hedged about as to involve a virtual monogamy. Even when this consideration is not explicit, it is implied to a greater or a less degree in the phraseology and general attitude. Almost no writer, who has substantial claims on any other grounds to being at all liberal, can be found to-day who will not only defend polygamy, but will do so in such a way as to show that he really believes it to be a superior system. One of the facts behind this attitude is that polygamy among the middle class to-day is almost non-existent. In fact, cases of marriage with a second wife are apt to be socially condemned. The more bourgeois the Indian Muslim is, the more he has in fact accepted monogamy ; but he is hardly willing to admit it yet as an explicit religious principle.

On *pardah* (seclusion) less progress has been made. It is still widely defended as the only alternative to the most horrible license. This is the more significant inasmuch as the *pardah* of India has little basis in the Qur'ān, the practice of Muḥammad, or the Canon Law. It is a local custom, sanctified only by use justified only by rationalisation. Still to-day a very large number of otherwise intelligent, liberal, and well-to-do Muslims observe *pardah*, or rather make their wives and daughters observe it.

Thus the under-cover retreat from defence of polygamy to that of *pardah* almost stops at the latter outpost. A few continue to retreat ; like one writer,⁶⁷ who is willing in passing to welcome the gradual disappearance of *pardah*, but whose chief concern regarding it is not that it be abolished but that the blame for it be ascribed to Hinduism, not Islam.

67. Jafri, op. cit.

The retreat stops virtually dead when it reaches segregation of the sexes. Even if not strictly adhering to veiling, all argue strenuously for "the principle of putting a restraint upon free or animal-like intercourse of the sexes with a view to purify the social conditions and elevate society."⁶⁸ This principle is considered to involve keeping the sexes segregated at all times, or at all times except when absolutely necessary for business reasons, such as when a woman is shopping in the *bāzār*; in such cases dealings between the two must be rigorously impersonal, eyes must be cast down, etc. On all other occasions segregation must be absolute—and particularly at times of pleasure, leisure, and social activities. Even the Englishman Pickthall, who pleads impassionedly for better treatment of women in Islam, including setting them free from *pardah*, attacks the West's liberty and advocates separate and independent social milieus for men and women.

That men and women should *enjoy* each other's company is thought to be obscene.

The most liberal of all this movement are the few stragglers who have withdrawn from the old position sufficiently far that they have reached the point of putting woman on a pedestal, or at least of claiming that they do, or should, or that Islam does. The pedestal is not very high, and sometimes, even, the woman upon it is still veiled while she is admired. Often enough, too, she is an ideal woman, not one of the actual persons whom the writers meet in real life, or to whom they are married. However, it shows the beginnings of a comprehension of that chivalry which the Arabs gave to Europe and forgot to keep for themselves.

These writers tell of Muḥammad's wonderful treatment of women—how gentle he was with them, how he honoured them, cared for them, respected them, how he fondly spoke of his foster-mother, etc. As we have seen in Amīr 'Alī, when they quote such a thing as his farewell speech, they omit the objectionable passages.⁶⁹ In their general treatment of the Islamic

68. Kidwai, *Harem, Purdah or Seclusion*, p. 23.

69. For instance, Ameer Ali, *Islam*, p. 48; Ilm-ud-Dīn, *The Prophet and His Message*, p. 11; and often. Cf. reference 11 above.

position of women, they betray in praising it a criterion according to which the female sex should be, not despised and subordinated, but honoured, respected, protected, idealised, and kept at a very pious distance.

There has been a tendency of late to resurrect from Islam's earlier and more brilliant (and more urban) history, cases of women who played a famous or important, and a free, role in society. To ward off the criticism of Muslim degradation of women, and to some extent perhaps even to ward off that degradation itself, lists are made of ancient Muslim women warriors, rulers, physicians, mystics, and the like.⁷⁰

To some slight extent, then, *pardah* and other mechanical contrivances for guarding the chastity of women are being slowly displaced by attitudes of honour and respect. This one aspect of the general transition from outwardly imposed authority to self-discipline and individual moral responsibility. We have already discussed this transition as characteristic of early bourgeois society. Those who defend *pardah* do so partly because, in their ideology, men cannot be *trusted*.

However, the general modernised position of Indian Islam on women can be said to be decidedly conservative, with some progressive ventures which can be summed up as efforts (or pretensions) to elevate woman as a daughter, a wife, and a mother. Herein lie both the achievements and the limitations of the movement : for whereas it considers her as a daughter, a wife, or a mother, and however highly, it never considers her as a *person*. She is regarded in relation to someone else, her parents, husband, or children ; and this relation may or may not be improved ; but she is not regarded absolutely, in and for herself. There is no conception of companionship between a man and a woman. It is not denied, it is simply not understood. The absolute value of a female person, as an interesting, important, independent personality, with infinite potential development, is ignored. The

70. For instance, Sulaiman Nadwi, "Heroic Deeds of Muslim Women," *Islamic Review* (Woking and Lahore), vol. XXIV, nn. 8 f. (Aug.-Sept. 1936), pp. 301 ff. ; Zaidi, *Qur'anic Purdah and Distinguished Muslim Women* ; and often.

possible relation of friendship between men and women each in their own rights as individuals, like that between men and men, is not conceived. The only relation allowed between them is as functionaries, usually sexual functionaries; not as persons.

It must be recorded that this complete absence of any but the ascetic attitude is a relatively late development in Islamic society. When culture has flourished in Islam, there have been some healthy and happy relations between men and women. For instance, in Mughal civilisation, upper-class men found, in women of the type of Nūr Jahān or Mūmtāz Maḥall, or at least in the dancing girls of every court, a highly cultured and a truly appreciated feminine companionship. It is only with the disintegration of feudal society that such an institution has decayed (or lapsed into prostitution); and with the onset of a capitalist order, such attitudes have been suppressed. Similarly in the West, Puritanism came when feudal culture (with its chivalry) was on the wane, and while capitalist society (with its liberalism—in the case of women, with a long time-lag) was still being constructed. As in Victorian Christianity, there is a large group in modern liberal Islam so ethically bankrupt (and so sexually obsessed) that the word “immoral” for them means nothing more than “unchaste”.

There are, of course, a few persons in the Muslim middle class of India who have attained free, easy, natural, and sane relations between individuals even when they are of different sex. There are marriages of companionship and friendship, of love based on mutual estimation, attraction, and psychologically balanced sexuality. But these, besides being rare, are almost entirely secular; the *religion* of Islam has not yet been able to include this virtue.

Reasons for backwardness on the score of feminism are not far to seek. First, there is the obvious psychological problem. It is well known that the human mind, never very comfortable when forced to move into new grooves, is particularly apt to be rigid concerning ideas to which it attaches religious significance. Religion heightens the value of anything that it touches; and just as it can give to the radical an unflinching enthusiasm, so it

endows the conservative with an inimitable and furious resistance to progress. The irreligious man values the old order less highly, and is correspondingly more complacent at the thought of its being replaced by a new. There is only one other part of life in which prejudices, the hard as-steel *idée fixe*, and a highly inflammable sensitivity that will go to any lengths to avoid having to think, can equal or surpass those in religion ; namely, sex. Here there abound those suppressions and feelings of guilt which psychoanalysis has only recently brought to light ; and in this case, the more unwholesome and unbalanced and sexually starved the old life has been, the stronger are the resultant prejudices. Where these two parts of life, sexual and religious, overlap or interpenetrate, the psychological resistance to conscious and rational thought, let alone to actual progress, is enormous. The attitudes, categories of thinking, values, etc., of a given sexual code, when sanctified by religion, can be discarded, or even dispassionately considered, only by those who have attained a very unusual degree of mental and emotional emancipation. In the light of modern psychological knowledge, it is not at all surprising that sex should be about the last point on which a religion makes progress.

None the less, there are of course sociological reasons also for the delay in modernisation of this aspect of Islamic life. Woman used to be considered of less value than man because she used to be, in brute fact, of less value—not ethically but in actual practice. Of the various things that used to need doing in a former society—for instance, in the society of Muḥammad's Arabia—most could be done better by a man than by a woman. This is because men are stronger and more agile. In a society of nomads, tribes need to fight, to seize their food, to attack animals, to protect their goods, to move quickly from place to place. A woman, who can be overcome by force by almost any man, and who must spend long periods of her life tied down and still further weakened with pregnancies and the care of children, is much less of an asset to the group and may easily become a liability. These were days when life was carried on largely by individual strength and by mobility ; and when "vir-tue" was but

a name for manliness. Of course, women were wanted to bear children, to satisfy men sexually, and to do minor jobs ; but there were lots of them available for all this. Furthermore, it was absolutely impossible for a woman to exist without a man to look after her. She was economically and in every other way dependent on man. The few ways in which man was dependent on woman, none of them absolute once he was weaned, counted for little in comparison. To such societies we do not look for systems of ethical equality between the sexes, or for feminist movements.

A modern industrialised society is totally different. The chief secondary distinction of a man, his strength, is practically of no value. There is almost nothing that he can do with it in a modern city, certainly nothing of any value. It is not as much of an asset as intelligence, nor even as a knowledge of typewriting. The things that need doing in a modern society can on the whole be done as well by a woman as by a man ; some, indeed, not so well, but several of them better. Any ethical or religious subordination of women to men, as less valuable or good, is not in correspondence with the concrete facts. However rigid may be its psychological hold, and however painful its supersession, because it is not in correspondance with the facts it must eventually disappear.

The one primary distinction remains, that of a woman's bearing and raising children. This deprives her of her independence to a nowadays constantly decreasing extent : with vacuum cleaners, tinned fruit juice, and modern flats, the woman in a highly industrial society, say New York or Moscow, even though a wife and mother, has more and more of the time and energy—she already has everything else—to make her *in fact* the equal of a man. When to the time and labour-saving devices of the home are added restaurants and creches outside of it, and state financial subsidies for pregnancies and children, the practical difference between the potentialities of men and women can be reduced as much as is desired (or because of the value of the children, could presumably become a superiority of women). In any case, the advance from primitive conditions of life to industrial and

scientific city-culture, has meant the gradual loosening of the chains which mercilessly bound woman down to a lower status than her freer partner, and will finally enable her to face life fully free.

But India, especially Muslim India, has by no means reached such a stage of culture. It has a small middle class, and a small amount of industrial and scientific achievement. This small amount has affected certain men considerably, but it has not affected their wives very much, and almost not at all directly. Keeping house is still a full-time job in India and it is still kept in much the traditional way. Most middle-class homes are run on servant labour, which gives the wife perhaps a good deal of leisure, but means that she has nothing to jolt her into new bourgeois ways of living. She does not meet the new methods of life sufficiently often or sufficiently directly to break through her religious prejudices carried over from a more backward age. She takes no immediate part in the structure of Indian bourgeois society—she is neither educated liberally, nor is she employed in the economic system. Her husband spends his working day in direct contact with new methods, and consequently he has, as we have been studying all this while, replaced to a considerable extent his mediaeval religion with a liberal one. But this replacement has not been forced to include the aspect of sex relations. (He hardly if at all comes in contact with liberal women, and not at all with the conditions that have produced her.) And the replacement will not include that aspect unless it is forced, so strong is the prejudice.

While it is theoretically true that women can perform about as well as men those tasks in which the Muslim middle classes are engaged, in fact they do not perform them. The productive system, confined as it is within the rigid imperialist framework, cannot expand to absorb all the middle-class men, even ; and women cannot enter it because they would most definitely not be welcome. If it were expanding fast, they would enter it whether welcome or not ; but as it is, the anti-liberal prejudice against them works to keep them out of the liberal life, and hence perpetuates the situation out of which the prejudice itself arises. If

women were allowed to take part in the activities of society, they would soon be performing them well enough to smash down the outworn ideas ; but those ideas are strong enough to slow down the material process which alone can, and eventually must, destroy them. (Similarly, even in England, the home of industrialisation and liberalism, the Suffragette movement, for all its idealist enthusiasm, was not in itself able to achieve the emancipation of women. That emancipation came when, during the First World War, women actually performed in society the tasks previously carried out by the now otherwise engaged males.)

The segregation of the sexes, which forms the rigid caste system of Islam, is like the caste system of Hinduism, based on social function.

If women were taking part in the productive activities of society, they would soon have that economic independence without which they cannot be truly free, and with which they will necessarily find freedom.

Furthermore, the religious institutions serve to aggravate the conditions which they express. *Pardah* is physically, intellectually, morally, degrading. For instance, it increases the incidence of tuberculosis and osteomalacia.⁷¹ Thus, more than ever woman in Islamic society is in fact inferior to man.

A consideration of the contemporary peasant society of India gives instructive comment on our analysis. In the village and its fields, the women do most certainly take part in the work of society. Because of their physique, they cannot accomplish quite as much as their husbands, but they work hard, and well, and with the same methods as do the men. Consequently they are treated with respect and freedom, though subordinated somewhat. Amongst Muslim peasants there is no strict *pardah*, no complete segregation. Their women live a life considerably freer, fuller, and more developed compared with the men, than do Muslim middle-class women. The latter, provided with servants, do little work ; they perform no specific function as persons. They perform their functions as women : they are wives, they bear and rear children. Hence, as persons in their own right

71. See Jones, *Woman in Islam*, p. 223.

they are despised ; though in relation (as wife, mother, daughter) they may at best be respected.

Woman in middle-class Muslim society in India still cannot, or can hardly, live independently; if she did not subordinate herself in some way to a man, to be financially supported by him, she would in all probability starve to death. As long as such a situation persists in fact, the theoretic subjection of women in Islamic religion will continue.

Later Developments of the Movement

As we have already indicated, the liberal movement within Islam, inspiring confidence, courage, and enthusiasm, was a progressive force of some importance in its initial stages. The term during which it was both forceful and progressive might be put roughly as extending from the close of the nineteenth century until the end of the Khilāfat movement against Britain after the First World War. To those who were building up an indigenous capitalism, to those who were struggling to advance against increasing odds, and finally to those who took upon themselves to resist the mighty exploitation of British imperialism and worked for an independent India, this religion gave strength and determination. At this time it was a healthy growth, and spontaneous. It served the needs of men who were building something new, and satisfied them ; giving them as their own the values and attitudes of the society they were bringing into being. Liberal civilisation, science, learning, rationalism, hard work, were theirs. In the conflict with Britain which took the Khilāfat form, it endowed them with an ideological equality with or superiority over their adversaries, without which a struggle of severe self-sacrifice cannot be waged.

The situation, however, changed. After the collapse of the Khilāfat and Non-Co-operation movements, the Indian middle classes made a brief return to economic expansion, their reward for the collapse. Presently, however, they settled down to a troubled existence of confinement and slow frustration, struggling hard but making little progress. They were distracted between opposition to the imperial power, and alliance with it for protection against other capitalists and more especially against the masses.

The bourgeoisie has not been strong enough to plunge ahead on its own and give a lead ; it has had to accept the *status quo* with considerable discontent at its faults, but has not known what to do about it. Latterly there have arisen thinkers offering a solution, socialists calling to the lower classes and leading to a supersession of liberal society by a new co-operative order. Against these thinkers and the movement that they represent, the middle classes have risen to defend themselves.

Of late, accordingly, the religious movement that we are considering has been frankly conservative. Before that, but after its progressive period, it was for a time rather ineffectual and meaningless, surviving partly by inertia and partly by giving emotional satisfaction to a distraught and frustrated class. To analyse the function of a religion in the life of a stagnating bourgeoisie is difficult. Liberal religion in such cases is itself vague. This has frequently been pointed out of late concerning the liberal Christianity of Europe before the First World War, or in America lasting another decade or more, until the Depression. It is equally true of this liberal movement within Islam, once its constructive period was passed. The pragmatic question : What difference did this religion make in an individual's life, receives no ready answer. Of course, religion gathered about itself in the religious person's life all those moral impulses which are latent in human nature, and it tended to strengthen them : kindness, loyalty to friends, regard for others' misfortunes—"altruism" in the broadest, vaguest sense. To some men, this altruism is religion : "The essence of Islam is the service of humanity."⁷² Now it is objectively true that these moral values may also exist in atheist or agnostic. But these religious people, identifying with their religion whatever in themselves is, or tries to be, good, tend to think that if religion disappears, all that is or tries to be good in people will also disappear. Believing that God is Beauty, Truth, and Justice, they imagine that folk who do not believe in God do not believe in Beauty, Truth, and Justice. Hence their attitude to atheists or amelists as people incomprehensible and

inhuman. But they are wrong in so imagining : non-theists may believe in the moral values, they simply do not believe the further step that those values are the will of a God. It is an empiric fact of human society, especially liberal society, that irreligious people are often as moral in the vague liberal sense as are religious ones.

Apart then from its subsuming the diffuse altruism of liberalism, what was this Islam ? Wherein did the Muslim who accepted it differ pragmatically from the secular middle class liberal ? He differed in belief, for he believed certain propositions about Muhammad, God, Islamic history, and so on, which the other sometimes denied or ridiculed but more often did not consider. But did this difference in belief lead to any difference in action ? In other words, were the two men actually different ? In some cases yes; for in some cases, the religious liberals, accepting the new Islam to a partial degree only, kept along with it a partial residue of the old, practical, religion of former times ; and to that extent they observed the practices and ritual of the traditional pre-liberal faith. But in its pure form the new Islam rejected theoretically all those old observances. Listen to Mawlawī 'Abd al-Karīm—president of the Bengal Muslim League, president of the Bengal Muhammadan Educational Conference, honorary fellow of the University of Calcutta—repudiating both ritual and dogma : "Islam does not regard ritual and ceremonies as essentials of religion. In fact mere dogmatic doctrines have no significance for a true Muslim".⁷³ If religion is neither belief nor practice, what is it ? Far be it from a liberal to have a religion that is definite, that imposes any specific duty. The above occurs in an essay on Islam's marvellous contribution to science and civilisation, an essay in which, as late as 1935, he is still arguing simply against Christianity as deterring culture and for Islam as promoting it. The whole essay proves little except that the writer has thoroughly absorbed the liberal values of his time. ("An ignorant person cannot adequately realize the greatness and goodness of God"⁷⁴—this in the

73. Abdul Karim, *Islam's Contribution to Science and Civilisation*, p. 11

74. *ibid* , p. 14.

days when without a degree one cannot get a job) Having absorbed those values, he regards them as Islam. Ritual and dogma are rejected ; if pressed, he would doubtless answer that Islam is not these things, but a spirit. It is, to be precise, the spirit of liberalism—perhaps emotionally heightened.

We have throughout noticed that this Islam makes no demands. It distributes pride and contentment gratis : it incites to satisfaction, not to activity, certainly not to change, Muḥammad is admirable ; Islam is admirable ; Muslims are fine people.

Religion seems to be but the feeling of satisfaction that accompanies the bourgeois life.

Or, at other times, it is the emotional compensation for a lack of satisfaction in that life. This is a service which religion has traditionally offered to mankind ; modern religion does it in a modern way. Pre-liberal supernaturalism assured the guilt-ridden and overburdened, of a functionary in Heaven (Christ, Mary, Muḥammad . . .) who would mediate for them and plead their case, or a lenient God who would treat them well, better than they deserved. The liberal faith provided them in this world with a feeling of satisfaction, and with a friend and counsellor, who would share their burdens and problems, and stand by them in times of difficulty.

The inertia of the movement is evidenced in the fact that increasingly, since the Khilāfat collapse, the advocates of the movement have been men whose intention, frequently avowed, is not to save the world or to save men, but to save a religion. The exponents are no longer representative of the classes concerned, proclaiming for themselves and their fellows a religion arising out of their daily life ; but are representatives of the religion, reasoning with those classes lest there arise out of their daily life some other beliefs. They do not say that **unless men are Islamic, they will flounder**, but that **unless Islam is modern, it will disappear**. "In order to guard Islam as a living force it is . . . essential to bring our religious thought up to date"⁷⁵ It is

small wonder, therefore, that religion has not only ceased to lead men, but has ceased even to drive them from behind. Rather the enthusiastic devotion of a religious group who "serve Islam" is necessary to keep religion itself from lagging so far behind as to become lost. Almost any active representative of this movement would admit, and many did admit implicitly or openly, that were it not for the strenuous efforts of those interested in perpetuating Islam, it would gradually die out among the younger educated classes. Islam was being preserved by those who had an emotional vested interest in its preservation.

The purely defensive attitude is made clear by almost every religious organisation that is founded, every periodical published, etc., in their names or aims: "Society for the Defence of Islam," "Association of the Servants of the Religion," "to defend Islam against attack," "to remove doubts in the minds of students," etc. The problem that this type of religion faces is not to save mankind but to save itself.

Liberal religion is emotional and vague, and lacks system. It formulates no coherent theology. In fact, it has almost no comprehensive interest, but concerns itself only with details or with persons one by one, like its individualist and chaotic society; we saw one reflection of this in the personal interest in Muḥammad. Since Amīr 'Alī's writings, hundreds of booklets and articles have appeared on Muḥammad, and on Islam and science, Islam and civilisation, Islam and women, Islam and slavery, Islam and what not; but almost nothing on Islam. What is more, there is a lack of serious systematic thought on those problems of fundamental theology, which even the incidentals of liberalism should raise. No one questions but that Muḥammad was a prophet, yet little thought is devoted to the question of prophethood itself—what prophecy means, whether "prophet" is an adequate category of thought in the light of modern knowledge, and if so in what precise sense. The modern student knows almost nothing of Islamic theology; but he has a fairly definite feeling that the traditional systems are inadequate, and a rather vaguer feeling that if one went back to first principles, the Qur'ān or Muḥammad, it would be all right. It is generally

taken for granted that theology is abstruse, remote from modern life and behind the times. In true liberal fashion, the moderns are surprised at any suggestion that a somewhat irrelevant theological system is at all unnatural.

The advocates of Islam to the liberals are afraid that religion may die out. They are, of course, right. Any religion will die out that does not have a positive function to fulfil, that is not something dynamic, summoning to action and leading men to some solution of their problems. Liberal religion all over the world has been more and more liberal and admirable, and has attracted fewer and fewer disciples, has influenced fewer and fewer of the decisions that men make. Success lay not with the men who devoted themselves however untiringly to proving and proclaiming that Islam was excellent and progressive, but with those who changed Islam to meet and even to be in advance of the requirements of the times, so that it was in fact excellent and in fact progressive. We shall study these later in our next section. Meanwhile we note that the liberal movement persisted between the two World Wars principally on momentum—its own, as a movement, and that of the individual's religious enthusiasm. A person who acquires in his early years a devotion to traditional Islam can, after he goes to the universities and becomes a liberal, continue to apply that devotion to the liberal Islam of this movement. The emotional power aroused by religion is tremendous, and is not easily allayed. But the passive Islam of the liberals, though it can receive that devotion, is hardly vigorous enough to provoke new enthusiasm on its own. It would be surprising if this type of Islamic religious liberalism could last more than one generation in each family.

The process of development in the social and economic environment of Indian Islam went on, and eventually produced a new situation which gave to liberal Islam what it had lost and had not been able to elaborate anew for itself; namely, a social function. But this time it has been a conservative function. At first the classes which this movement within Islam served were progressive and constructive, and religion was their driving force: now, after an intervening period in which they stagnated

and it was barren, they are finding their mode of life challenged. Liberalism and bourgeois society are challenged by socialism. Hereupon liberal Islam suddenly finds a new vigour and a definite goal: to preserve bourgeois society against these progressive attacks. In so far as it is conscious of the socialist alternative, the next stage in social evolution, the Islam which praised Islamic culture as liberal and excellent, and once welcomed social change, now uses that appreciation of that past culture to resist any further development. It fights lest itself in its turn be superseded.

The first step is to call a halt to reform. The movement never did, as Sir Sayyid Aḥmad's movement had done, denounce abuses—to do so would have been a call to activity. Nevertheless, it did accept the chief liberal reforms of Sir Sayyid, rejected most of the abuses that he had denounced. Now it begins itself to denounce—but not social evils; rather further reforms. Mawlawī 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Sharar of Lucknow continued an active social reform policy, much like Sir Sayyid's, well into the twentieth century (he died in 1926); his positive campaign roused opposition and disparagement, while the more passive liberals were being applauded. *Nigār*, a Lucknow journal, has been criticising the idea of divine revelation, carrying rationalism and the liberal approach to their logical conclusions; and a storm of protest has arisen—from "liberal" circles. Recently, sufficient pressure has been exercised on the editor to quieten him. Various individuals would publish increasingly liberal studies of Islam, but have been afraid to do so lest they lose their positions in colleges. And so on. The atmosphere recently has been decidedly hostile to religious innovations or advance of any sort, and even favourable to retrogressions to the past. To some of these retrogressions we shall return.

There is emphasis on the finality of Islam. Previously the emphasis was on the supremacy of Islam among existing systems, specifically existing religions; Islam is better than anything else the world has ever produced. Now it is held that Islam is better than anything else it *can* produce: nothing new will emerge to supersede Islam. Muḥammad Asad notes that all historical

cultures are organic: they rise, show youthful vigour, flourish in glorious maturity, and then inevitably decay. Is Islam like that? —he asks; is its day done? It would seem so; but, if we believe Islam to be not a mere human culture like the others, but a law from God, “then we never can admit that, like other cultures, it is chained to the lapse of time and limited by the rules of organic life.”⁷⁶ In other words, the laws of evolution—above all, the laws of dialectics—must not be considered to apply to Muslims. This attitude is strongly reinforced by the use of the well-worked-out emphasis on past Islamic culture, to keep people looking backward towards the past rather than forward to a future.

The socially conservative function of religion is apparent in its idea of right and wrong. In general, the liberal conception of sin may be summed up as the transgression of the rights of others. This is a typically bourgeois notion: it envisages each individual as possessing something which it is sinful to take away from him. The man who possesses nothing hardly comes within its view. For example, to steal part of the wealth of a mill-owner or a Mahārājā is a sin in liberal religion, as it is a crime in bourgeois law. To allow a labourer to receive a low wage, or a peasant to suffer from tuberculosis is, on the other hand, at most a pity. Similarly righteousness is negative. The liberal moral code, in so far as it is specific, is, like the bourgeois legal code, a list of things which one must not do. The righteous man is thought of as one who keeps from committing adultery, who does not tell lies, who avoids cheating in business, etc. At the most generous, a supererogatory righteousness relieves suffering and misfortune; but it does not obviate it. There is nothing creative about goodness; and as long as one leaves things as they are, there is no sin.

This conservatism reappears in the notion of religion serving in society as an “inner check”. Rather than paying attention to man’s noble impulses and good potentialities, which religion should encourage and develop, all the emphasis is laid on his evil passions, which religion must restrain. The state law is not

quite adequate for this purpose, for it can sometimes be evaded; without the inner check of religion, man would commit all the atrocities that he could get away with. As an explicitly anti-socialist writer puts it, it is "inevitable" without a belief in God and in the retribution of evil deeds "that bestial passions should overpower the human nature."⁷⁷ This is the constant creed of those who fear that without a strong check (in addition to the law and police force), the lower classes will overpower the state. "Religion is a check on humanity; this is the chief value of religion."⁷⁸

Religion was made to serve this purpose also in a feudal society. Moreover, at the end of the feudal era, when that society was about to be replaced by a newer, bourgeois, form, the champions of the old order saw this conservative function of religion as its chief function. A fundamental difference of approach between the two ideologies, however, is instructive; it shows how much progress has been made towards a completely "this-worldly" attitude. For in feudal society, a man must be good in this life in order to please God and to go to Heaven in the next. In liberal terms, on the other hand, a man must believe in God and in the next life, in order to be good in this. Thus even for other-worldliness, the liberal uses a pragmatic, mundane criterion. But he seldom believes in a life after death at all. Usually he does not think about Heaven (and almost never about Hell), and it disappears through neglect. If asked, he says that he believes; but he is asked with decreasing frequency. Explicit repudiation of another world, however, is common only with socialists.

Another aspect of the growing conservatism of present-day liberal Islam is that communalism grows. Cohesion and communal unity are more important than the unity of God. Where the essence of Islam was said to be the service of mankind, it is now said to be the service of the Muslim community. This latter idea has recently sunk very deep into the mentality of educated Muslims. In the earlier part of this century, the universalist

77. Ahmad Pai, *Communism and Islam*, p. 9.

78. Sir 'Abd al-Qādir, in a personal interview with the present writer, Lahore, 28 October 1940.

Akbar (the sixteenth-century humanist emperor of India who inaugurated the brilliant Mughal age) was the pride of the liberal; while the communalist Aurangzeb (his great-grandson, whose bigoted reign brought that age to a close) was rejected. Now the former has been denounced as a renegade, the latter applauded as a champion of Islam. Not that the modern liberal is conscious of having retreated from a previous more humanitarian position; on the contrary, he thinks of himself as progressive, in contrast with a still earlier legalism. "While we used to consider a man a good Muslim if he said his prayers and fulfilled the Canon Law, now we realize that such details are relatively unimportant: some men have observed these and yet betrayed the community. We now understand that true Islam is a spirit—the strengthening of the Musalmans."⁷⁹ More extreme: Hinduism "is a mass of superstition and immoral usages. . . . Hinduism is a deadly conservatism. . . . In the interests of a larger humanity, therefore, it is necessary that Hinduism should be abolished."⁸⁰

The attitude to the West is instructive. Blatantly since the World Economic Depression, Western capitalism is decadent and bad. The lesson to be learned from this is to pass on from capitalism (and liberalism) to socialism. But the lesson which is instead being taught is to revert from Western liberalism to a Muslim liberalism; or, if that will not suffice, to a Muslim conservatism. The obvious collapse of the West is used for an attack on secularism or Christianity, not on capitalism; the argument against Christianity is, especially since the outbreak of a second world war, practically complete. And the Muslim conservatives feast on proofs of the superiority of Islam over the "westernisation" which seemed to them to sum up the irreligious liberal tendency of the modern youth. The young Muslim who thinks of leaving the old Islam for the brave new world that he discovers in the universities, at the cinema, and in his part in the business world, is threatened with all the horrors of the modern

79. The Vice-Principal of an Islamia College, to the present writer; December 1944.

80. Durrani, *The Future of Islam in India*, pp. 87-8.

West, unless he go back to the culture of the Islamic past.

There was a time when nothing pleased Islamic liberalism so much as Western applause. Carlyle's essay on Muḥammad as the hero-prophet became almost as popular as a sacred text. Other passages in English literature or from the English historians that had some word of praise for Islam quickly found their way into Muslims' hands and were quoted about from one to another with a flourish. Some half-dozen tributes, in addition to Carlyle's, particularly of the cultural achievements and contributions of Saracenic civilisation, from the pens of Gibbon, Bosworth Smith, Draper, Davenport, and one or two others, became the stock exhibits of those who in this particular way answered the feeling of inferiority which the Muslim bourgeois had before the West. Nowadays this reliance upon Europe for appreciation has given way to bitter denunciation of the European breakdown. These simply point out, without feeling the need of proof or profound analysis, how much better is the Islamic way of life. Capitalism in India, though feeble and unsatisfactory enough, has not yet developed sufficiently to reach the stage of utter and patent collapse of European capitalism; and the religious protagonists rush in with the assumption that what is wrong with society in the West is that it is not Islamic enough. For the religion of Islam, they content themselves with saying, does not "permit" aggressive wars, ruthless exploitation, complete moral bankruptcy, and the other manifestations of capitalist degeneracy. They resist the correct analysis of what is wrong with that society, lest it apply also to them.

Similarly, they used to accept not only the moral values of liberalism, but capitalism itself. It was accepted in practice, of course, and still is; but it was also welcomed theoretically—any objections to it as a system were answered. Latterly the differences between Islam and capitalism have been emphasised—in theory. Pride is taken in them. The point has been only to prove that Islam is ideally better than capitalism, not to do anything about it. Recently there has been a summons, indeed, to do something about it—a reactionary summons from capitalism to an Islamic fascism; but that is a later story. Meanwhile the

liberals, now conservative, have simply pointed out that the vices of capitalism, as apparent in the West, are not inherent in Islam. As we have said, Islam does not "permit" them. It discourages hoarding (great emphasis on this particular point) and huge incomes, ostentation, unkindness to employees, and all that kind of thing. . . . All religions, all humanity, liberalism itself, are of course opposed to the horrors and the vicious results of the capitalist system. The point to be considered is whether they are opposed to the system itself, which produces them.

Liberal Islam is most decidedly not opposed. In fact, like liberal Christianity, it uses its opposition to the results as an excuse for not opposing the thing itself. A Muslim can be quite readily convinced that capitalism in an Islamic country simply would not have its more atrocious aspects. With those who are aware enough to demand some basic criticism of capitalism, liberal Islam pretends to be opposed. It is fashionable nowadays to speak of capitalism, Islam, and socialism, as three systems—which creates an opposition between the first two at least in thought. Usually, Islam is held to be a *via media* between the other two systems with the excesses of neither. This belief is remarkably widespread, and remarkably seductive. The argument owes its apparent force to the fact that Islam is associated with a society either pre-capitalist or early capitalist. Capitalism within Islam has not developed far enough to display the characteristics of a full-blown capitalist society, against which socialism is the reaction, or in dialectical terms, the antithesis. Naturally Islam, therefore, does not (yet) give evidence of the "extremes" of either European and American capitalism or of communism. Compared with the former, its class structure is (as yet) less rigid, its struggles less horribly acute. Its owning class is not (yet) as rich, its morality is not (yet) as undermined and degenerate, its women not (yet) as economically independent and at the same time functionless. Its young men are not (yet) as disillusioned (though they are almost as frustrated). It is easy for Muslims who do not think too deeply to suppose that Islam and Western capitalism are two alternatives, rather than two stages in one process. They naturally, then, think that the former

is "better".

Islam is the *via media* between modern capitalism and socialism in the sense that it represents a stage in social development prior to them both.

To distinguish between Islam and capitalism, Muslims love to rely upon the three institutions of *zakāh* (the canonical poor-rate), *mīrāth* (legal inheritance), and the prohibition of *ribā* (interest, usury). It is rare indeed to find a Muslim liberal who is not firmly convinced that these things are fundamental. It is piously supposed that, taken together, these three make a gulf between capitalism and the "Islamic economic system" so broad and so deep that none of the capitalist vices can cross it.

Zakāh is an annual levy on the unconsumed surplus assets (productive property, of the possessing classes—a system worked out on the basis of a pre-money economy—to be used by the state for the benefit of the dispossessed. The rate is generally 2½%. The *zakāh* corresponds more or less to that portion of the taxes—income, property, and other—of any modern capitalist state, that is spent on unemployment relief and other social services. It is distinctive to the Islamic state in form only, not in principle. Most states in the world have had something of the kind, though in modern states it is always something much more substantial. The form is distinctive, of course, and is relevant to a predominantly agricultural society. No modern independent Islamic state has adopted it—Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, etc. . . .

Mīrāth is a distinctive Islamic law of inheritance, imposing the distribution of the property which a man who is rich enough to own property leaves at his death. He is not at liberty to will all his property as he chooses, but must divide most of it in prescribed proportions amongst his prescribed heirs. This prevents him from leaving his entire fortune to one person. The relevance of this to the modern day is in the supposition that by this means the inheritance, and presumably hence the acquisition, of large fortunes in a few hands is made impossible. In a landed society, the area of the land is constant, and the distribution of land at each generation no doubt acts as a check on monopoly. (Many sections of feudal Europe had same principle.

in their laws.) But in industrial, and more in financial, capitalism, colossal fortunes can be, and are, accumulated rapidly and expanded rapidly. There are, of course, in the modern West numerous devices designed specifically to counteract this process, nor do they take generations to work; none the less, even they are ineffective in checking the accumulations and concentration of wealth. However that may be, its system of distributive inheritance is what Islam confidently offers to counter-balance—or, more strictly, to pretend to counter-balance—capitalist monopoly and the concentration of wealth.

Quite apart from how ineffective it might be, it is again worth noting that in other countries no Muslim middle class which has attained power in the capitalist world has imposed this system upon itself.

The one point at which capitalism and Islam might clash, for it is the one point at which the religion contradicts not the results of capitalism but its structure is the question of interest. At this point Islam, like all religions, has, after a battle, finally retreated. The taking of interest on loans is prohibited by the Qur'an (as it was prohibited by pre-capitalist Christianity). Sir Sayyid Ahmad began the assault on this prohibition; and naturally his school was soon reconciled to interest, as basic to the new order. Nadhîr Ahmad especially was effective in incorporating interest into the religion of Islam. At that time it was a progressive step; to remain there now is conservative. The newer movement accepted the position, with more or less ardour. Representing as it did varying degrees of liberalisation, it is not surprising that we find in it every stage of opinion on the subject—except a basic repudiation of interest as a system. Some men proposed not to avail themselves of bank interest on their own deposits; some advocated receiving that interest but devoting it to charity; some kept a tally and aimed at balancing the sums that they received from interest with those that they expended so; some would admit interest in commercial but not in private transactions; etc. Commenting on Qur'an iii. 129 ("O ye who believe! devour not *riba*, doubling it again and again; but fear Allah, that ye prosper"), a modern business man writes,

"The qualifying phrase, 'usury making additions again,' clearly shows that Islam does not prohibit all interest, at least that interest which does not double and redouble itself. . . . Islam is a religion that puts great stress on trade, and it could not be thought that it has prohibited that which is to a very great extent necessary in the daily business."⁸¹ This is followed by a long justification⁸² of interest-taking, on the usual moral grounds, as the reward for waiting, for taking a risk, and so on. There is a curious but definite trend to just the situation in capitalist Europe: the word "*ribā*" like the word "usury," originally meaning interest, keeps something of the moral stigma that it had, but slowly changes its meaning to exclude the ordinary commercial dealings, and is applied only when the rate is abnormally high or the affair unusually extortionate.

The important consideration about the whole question remains constant, however, whether some subterfuge, rationalisation, or accommodation is used to circumvent the point, or whether, for the sake of winning over the anti-capitalist, the prohibition of interest is insisted upon (theoretically). This important consideration is that the basic instance of interest in the capitalist system, the right of the property-owning class to draw profits from its investments, is never challenged. The most extreme Muslims object only to "fixed" rates of interest, never to that interest which is a share in the fluctuating profits of an enterprise. In other words, regarding an industrial enterprise these religious writers would at the most extreme advise the Muslim bourgeois to leave someone else to buy the bonds, and to buy only shares himself. "Islam says instead of lending money on interest we should invest our money in trade."⁸³ Islam has voiced no protest against the system which allows one group of men to live and profit off the labour of another group. Exploitation of man by man, in the one form in which to-day it is hideously important, is not sin in the eyes of liberal Islam.

It is hardly necessary to add that these religious proponents

81. Jairazbhoy, *Fear Allah and Take Your Own Part*, p. 330.

82. *ibid.*, pp. 329-51.

83. Amin, *Islam the Religion for the Modern Man*, p. 6.

not only have never put forward the argument, but cannot even understand, that the prohibition of interest, if taken seriously, would include the prohibition of land rent and of the whole landlord system—would mean precisely the socialisation of agriculture in the interests of those who labour on the land. The idea behind the prohibition of interest on loans, by the early Church and by Muḥammad, is this (and it has obtained in societies where dealings were personal, between a man and his fellow-villager ; not where they were impersonal, between corporations); that when one man has more money or wheat or clothes than he can use, and his neighbour has none, it is fundamentally unjust that the latter should not use the surplus goods of the former without having to increase that surplus still further in the end. If a landlord "owns" more land than he himself can use for providing his needs, and a peasant has no land at all, then it is fundamentally unjust that that peasant should not use the land to grow food, etc , for himself, without increasing still further, by paying rent, the surplus fortune of the richer man. But that socialism is the putting into practice of the ideals and values of the world's prophets and religions, is a truth which the bourgeois followers of those prophets and religions are slow to recognise.

The specific attack of Islam on socialism takes two forms. One is that of saying that Islam *is* socialism. The other is that of showing that socialism is not Islamic. Both are effective in so far as socialism is misrepresented.

Those who say that Islam is socialism mean that Islam is so similar to socialism that it is all the socialism that one needs. Do not be a real socialist; simply be a Muslim and bring about a Muslim society, which has all the values of socialism without its actuality. When stated baldly, the idea sounds fatuous ; but it is an idea very widespread to-day and is moderately effective in keeping the minds of men away from thinking about socialism itself. The technique has been used before by Hitler, who calls his system "National Socialism". Islamic socialism, or just Islam, provides the material for a Muslim fascist movement which we shall study later.

To maintain that Islam already is socialism, so that no more progress is either necessary or desirable, is done sometimes simply by stating it and reiterating it. If it is repeated often enough, and if one is vague enough about either Islam or socialism or both, in the end it is believed. Or, the great trinity of *zakāh*, *mīrāth*, *ribā*, is pointed out with a flourish. Again, the Qur'ānic injunctions against hoarding wealth, against unkindness, etc., are paraded. One writer even draws parallels between the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah (between Muḥammad and the Makkans) and that of Brest-Litovsk.⁸⁴ Another man opens his lecture with the words : "The holy prophet of Islam was the greatest socialist the world has ever known. He did not like to call his followers his disciples, but called them 'ashab' which means comrades."⁸⁵ Some draw attention to the objectives of the two movements : universal brotherhood, justice and equality for all, encouragement of learning, etc.

Like those who said that Islam is naturalism, but were afraid that some might turn to naturalism, and call it Islam, so these folk have no desire that the youth should take them at their word, and adopt true socialism, and say "this is Islam". Consequently there are many ready to point out that in some respects socialism is un-Islamic, and where the two systems differ Islam is by far the better. One writer devotes several hundred pages to the similarities of Islam and Communism (brotherhood, justice, race equality, internationalism, etc.), then another hundred or so to their "main difference" (concerning the existence of God and the religious basis of morality) ; and then feels that before he closes he must point out a few minor differences, which are all to Islam's advantage : for instance, Islam recognises private property (though conceives of it as a trust from God, hence not absolutely at the disposal of the owner), it does not recognise a class struggle . . . and so on.⁸⁶

The trustee theory of property proffered by these Muslims is

84. Kidwai, *Pan-Islamism and Bolshevism*, pp. 111 ff.

85. Amin, op. cit., p. 1.

86. Kidwai, op. cit.

identical with that held by Gandhi⁸⁷ and other Hindus and by untold multitudes of bourgeois Christians. The emphasis laid on it is strong; as it is on the marvellous class collaboration which Islam enjoins and supposedly secures. Islam holds the rich morally responsible for the way in which they spend their money (the attention is on spending, not earning it); and provides "a social code in which the claims of capital and labour, landlord and peasant . . . are all quite happily reconciled"⁸⁸; "there is no clash of labour and capital in the Islamic social order."⁸⁹

It is quite apparent that both those who say that Islam is already socialism, and those who say that Islam is not socialism but is a much better system, have no clear idea whatever of what socialism is, or pretends to be. They know nothing about the public ownership of the means of production; nothing about the distinction between that public ownership, and private property in consumers' goods which socialism not only allows but aims at increasing. They do not understand the communist analysis of class struggle, and that communism claims to eliminate the conflict and its causes, not to stir it up. They vaguely imagine socialism as a desire for economic equality, or an imposition of such equality by force, or by a system of not allowing anybody to own anything.

This ignorance of what socialism precisely means is ardently fostered by the political situation. The British government removes from both public and private libraries and from bookshops books from which Indians might discover the truth about

87. "Must the wealthy be dispossessed of all their holdings? Non-violence answers no. . . . The wealthy man . . . must be left in possession of his wealth so that he may use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and act as trustee for the remainder, to be expended for the benefit of society." Gandhi, "What Will To-morrow's World Be Like," *Reader's Digest*, Pleasantville, N.Y., vol. XXXVIII, no. 228 (April 1941), p. 110. Condensed from *Liberty*, New York, 2 April 1941. (The article from the *Reader's Digest* was reprinted in *The Tribune*, Lahore, 1 June 1941, but with acknowledgment to *Liberty*.)

88. Pickthall, *The Cultural Side of Islam*, p. 163.

89. 'Abd al-Majid Khān, *Islamic Concept of a New Social Order*, p. 5.

socialism. It arrests and imprisons without trial persons who try to explain to them what socialism actually is. Finally, it singles out for honour and decoration folk who "describe" communism in terms so fantastic as to be more curious even than revolting.

One Aḥmad Pā'ī of Delhi, goaded into fury by hearing young men say that Islam and Communism are the same, replies⁹⁰ by telling them what the latter "really" is. "Like any other thing, say land, capital, buildings, etc., woman under the Soviet Communism too cannot belong to anyone. She is the common property of all the members of the society and is subject to distribution by the Government like any other produce"⁹¹; the Russian government solves its housing problem by making abortion compulsory; economically, individuals are deprived of all personal property, even what they produce themselves. (The prevalent and ludicrous notion that, in communism, woman is owned in common, is held by men who presumably think that a woman should be owned privately. These men look upon her as private property, a chattel.)

The Muslim bourgeois is not content, however, with misunderstanding socialism. He will fight it too. The liberal movement that we have been considering, presenting Islam as a liberalism excellent and to be admired, gives way to a more active programme in which it, and its capitalist society, shall be not only admired but ardently preserved and fought for. This brings us to the contemporary reactionary movement within Islam, using religion as a rallying cry for social retrogression. But before we consider it, we must in a new chapter examine the group of religious progressive intellectuals.

A Note on 'Uthmāniyah University

The 'Uthmāniyah (Osmania) University, Hyderabad, Deccan, has no direct connection with Islamic liberalism. None the less, there is propriety in giving it some consideration at this point, for in so far as it is religiously significant (which is not very far) it belongs logically to the liberal movement, strengthen-

90. Ahmad Pai, op. cit.

91. *ibid.*, p. 10.

ing and popularising the culture of Islam.

The university was founded in 1918. It is the state university of Hyderabad, the most important of the native states. (The state is predominantly Hindu, but the ruler is both absolute and Muslim.) It is distinctive among the official universities of India in that the language of instruction is not English, but Urdu. Also for all students the study of either Islamic theology (for Muslims) or ethics (for non-Muslims) is compulsory. In every other respect it is quite parallel to the other official universities of India established by the British. It teaches the culture of the liberal West, in Urdu ; as Aligarh taught it in English.

Naturally, in order to teach in Urdu the curriculum of the modern Arts and Sciences, a great amount of translation work has been necessary. Apart from the experiment proving that higher education in an Indian language is possible, the work of the translation bureau has been the major contribution of 'Uthmānīyah to Indian cultural life. The translations are plentiful, though not very good. The Urdu employed has been much Persianised and Arabised ; for the sake of communalism. An anomaly is that the teaching is not actually in the "vernacular"; since in that part of India Urdu is the language not of the people but of the ruling class.

Apart from translations, the university has little influence outside Hyderabad : few Muslims from the rest of India, especially the north, send their sons there, or are very conscious of it ; and its original publications, few enough in any case, have little circulation.

'Uthmānīyah reproduces the culture of the modern West in Urdu, the language of Indian Islam—as the liberals reproduced the values and ideals of that culture in the Islamic religion. One must not underestimate the service that they are thus performing. But it is uncreative. There is nothing basically original in their education. The translations are mostly of text-books, from English ; there is little that is startling among the works chosen for translating.⁹²

92. Osmania University, Bureau of Translation and Compilation, *List of Publications*.

The Muslims of North India, though they do not do anything about 'Uthmānīyah, such as attend it, nor is their life much influenced by it, are nevertheless proud of it. It is an admirable example of Islamic culture.

*Chapter Three**

THE MOVEMENT IN FAVOUR OF A NEW CULTURE OF THE FUTURE : PROGRESSIVE

Classical Islam, at its highest, was a religion admirably conceived to give courage, dignity, and serenity to man facing a life of adversity, and to give him charity towards his fellow-man. To-day, if it would function in this radically new world in which we find ourselves, it must be refashioned to give dynamic initiative and vision to man facing a life of opportunity, and to give him creative love towards the community of his fellow-men.

Such a refashioning was a service rendered to Islam chiefly by the outstanding Muslim poet and thinker of the century, Muḥammad Iqbal. The need for this service may be measured in terms of the universal attention and veneration which he has attracted. He is great because he said with supreme eloquence and convincing passion what his fellows were vaguely beginning to feel, but were unable to formulate. Because they were activating and relevant to middle-class Muslims in their daily lives, as well as because they were beautifully done, his interpretation of Islam and the inspiring vigour of his poetry were received avidly.

Men used to think that the world was flat ; and so long as they stayed near home the thought served them well enough. When travellers moved over larger areas of the planet, however, and dealt more frequently and more precisely with longer distances, they found that thinking about flat surfaces was inadequate and led them astray. Consequently man has been forced to adopt the spherical theory.

Similarly with time : as long as evolution was slow, as long as fundamental changes in society and human life came seldom,

*All references in Chapter Three are to Iqbal's writings unless otherwise stated.

man got along well enough with a static philosophy. But when the process became so accelerated that appreciable changes occurred within the lifetime of an individual, it was not long before the old modes of thought proved inadequate ; and dynamic, evolutionary, and dialectical philosophies appeared and were popular. Nowadays changes in every aspect of life come so thick and fast that he who has not learned to think dynamically will make more and more mistakes and be led far astray.

A beginning was made in the move to dynamic thinking in the liberal phase of Islam, as it had been, more thoroughly, in liberal thought in the West. This beginning was principally in the idea of evolution, which was applied, though stintingly, to the Muslim religion. We have noticed how writers like Amir'Ali and Khudā Bakhsh used the principle of evolution to rid modern Islam of its superseded aspects. This principle, and the similar one of historical criticism, could readily serve as defensive weapons for isolated points ; for instance, polygamy could be regarded as natural or good in Muḥammad's time, though evil today. But few thinkers really absorbed the principle entirely, applying it not only when useful in defence but throughout. Few liberal Muslims abandoned the static ideas of religious authority and finality. Yet the idea of progress became popular, as it must in a changing and potentially advancing world. Much energy was devoted to proving Islam progressive. One pamphleteer writes : "If a religion or creed refuses to conform to the needs of the time and advance with the changing environment, it practically refuses to progress."¹ This tautology means at least that the author has deemed progress a virtue, and assumes that his readers will at once recognise the refusal to progress as a condemnation of even religion. However, all this trend was but a concession to the spirit of the times ; never a complete absorption of it. At best, the liberal attitude was an accommodation to existing social change, seldom an exhortation to more.

Moreover, the next stage, after liberal evolution, is reached by a further recognition : that not only is human society and human life changing rapidly, but it is man himself who is effect-

1. Muzaffar-ud-Din Nadwi, *Muslim Thought and Its Source*, p. 159.

ing the change. The application of science, the product of man's own thought and activity, to industrial processes, to medicine, to war, to sociology, is changing human life into unrecognisable newness. The changes themselves mean that the old ideas of metaphysics, God, and destiny, are no longer true. The fact that man himself makes the changes and can control them, means that the old ideas of ethics are no longer ethical. The problem of ethics is for man to choose the best when he is offered several possibilities. Now the number of possibilities in every case has been enormously increased. Further, there are innumerable cases in which for the first time man has several possibilities from which to choose, instead of being faced with one fixed course. To-morrow there will be still more possibilities, still fewer fixed cases. A dynamic ethics, like a dynamic philosophy, is needed. Religion must be not only modern, to fit a situation which is different to-day from what it was in the twelfth, or the seventh, century. (This was the liberals' task.) Religion must be also dynamic, to fit a situation which is different one minute from what it will be the next. One can better say that religion to-day must apply not to a situation at all, but to a process. And not only must it be fluent, be prepared for changes in that process, but in so far as it is ethical, it must guide the process, it must itself determine the changes.

However demanding the new occasions are, however irrelevant old thinking becomes to them, there is an inevitable time-lag of the ideas of the generality behind fact. Especially in religion, innovations however necessary are much resisted. A pioneer like Iqbāl, great enough to see the need of the hour and to meet it, was openly opposed by the old school; also, his ideas were resisted in the religious minds of even sympathetic men. His ideas were assimilated partially, were accepted only with some misconception. And this applies even to himself. The new religion was radically new, basically different. Iqbāl enunciated it, boldly; but he himself never really believed it without reservation. The old traditions with their emotional force were too deeply ingrained in him for him to abandon himself utterly to the new vision which he sometimes saw; certainly too deeply for him to act

upon it wholeheartedly. He was a poet, not a systematic thinker; and he did not hesitate to contradict himself.

What is more, new progressive ideas are resisted in men's minds not only because psychologically men are uncomfortable with mental novelty, but also because socially certain groups of men would not benefit, or imagine that they would not benefit, from social change. Iqbāl's ideas were resisted also because they would lead, properly, to socialism. Anti-socialists, therefore, misunderstood him, or read him only in parts. Iqbāl himself was a bourgeois, and in some respects a contented one; he never really deserted his class, and consequently even in idea he deserted it only spasmodically, returning to it from time to time and gainsaying his progressive ideology.

We ourselves, in the treatment of Iqbāl which here follows, have not made any undue effort to unify the contradictions of his prolific utterances. We have considered his progressive aspects along with the progressives, and his conservative and reactionary tendencies in the later section on modern reaction. This is because to integrate his divergencies would be misleading. His influence has not been single. The progressives read and follow only his progressiveness. The conservatives read, and can understand, only what urges them to more vigorous conservatism, or to overt reaction. In Iqbāl's unco-ordinated effusions, one can find whatever one wills—except static contentment. He praised and he execrated both Mary and Mussolini. He attacked traditional Islam and nationalism, and yet advocated an ardent nationalism for the traditionally Islamic community. Some people know one part of him and "follow" it; others another. Therefore, before we seek a phrase to sum up and to explain these antitheses, we shall study them separately and in turn. For so they have been important.

Iqbāl the Progressive

Muḥammad Iqbāl (1876-19382) was born in Sialkot, a

2. The biographical details here given about Iqbāl are based chiefly on Anwar Beg, *The Poet of the East*, Part I: *Life of Iqbāl*. This writer, however, gives the date of his birth as 1873; we have adhered to the later date, which is more generally accepted.

moderately large town of the Punjab, of a middle-class family. His father, who was first in government service, and later a trader was a pious soul with mystic tendencies, religiously strict. The boy's educational career, first in Sialkot and later at the provincial capital, was marked by brilliance. In Lahore, where after taking his M.A. he became a college lecturer, he began to attract attention as a young-man-about-town and as a popular poet. His early poems of this period are quite in the traditional style, verses on nature and love, of the typical Urdu lyric. At the turn of the century he was attracted also to the surging nationalism of the day, and wrote expressing the ideal of Indian unity and Indian freedom. He appealed strongly for Hindu-Muslim solidarity, and wrote inspiringly of the glorious land of India and of the honour, love, and devotion due to her. His "Song of India" (*Tarānah i Hindī*³), one of these patriotic poems, is to-day loved as a national anthem by thousands of all communities in India. He also wrote Islamic poems, and he was sponsored by the chief local Muslim society ; but even when addressing that group he pled for inter-communal co-operation.

In 1905 he went to Europe. Until that trip, there was nothing distinctive about Iqbāl except his ability. What he had to say, numerous others were saying ; only, they said it less well. But after three years in England and Germany he returned to India with a new and vibrant message. Not only was it expressed with supreme eloquence ; it has been the chief contribution to Indian Islam since that of Sir Sayyid Ahmad.

At Cambridge, Iqbāl continued his study of philosophy ; from Munich he received his doctorate degree for a thesis on Persian mysticism ; and from London he acquired the equipment for practising at the bar. His studies were supplemented by the forceful impact made by certain aspects of European life upon his sensitive and brilliant spirit. Three things in particular were impressed upon him, and out of them he constructed the message which he took back to Indian Islam. First was the immense vitality and activity of European life ; the exuberant initiative of the people whom he saw, the confident restlessness whereby if

they did not like a thing they changed it. Secondly, and related to this, he caught a vision of the tremendous possibilities before human life—the potentialities of which the Orient had not dreamed, but which Europe was already realising, and intended to keep on realising more and more. Man could think, do, be a thousand things for which Iqbāl's fellows back in India were not even striving; and once man had attained those things there would be a thousand more calling for endeavour. Thirdly, Iqbāl the critic noticed the severe and damning limitations to which European life, in spite of all its promise, was subject. The soul-destroying frustration of most individual lives in even a prospering capitalist society, and the worse than bestial competition between fellow-men, and, more obviously destructive, between nation and nation, turned Iqbāl away from Europe in disgust. He had seen much of value in parts of European life. Yet European life could never be a model for perfection. It was not good enough to serve as his ideal. Iqbāl felt with ardour that the thousands of young middle-class Indians who were devoting themselves simply to copying Europe, were being grossly misled. For the religion of his fathers had inspired Iqbāl to look for certain virtues and values that even Europe did not have; in certain respects the West was good, but in certain respects Islam taught better.

In 1908 Iqbāl returned to Lahore and set up a barrister's practice. However, he was primarily a poet, proclaiming and elaborating his message of dynamic activism, of a potentially glorious future, and of the supreme value of Islam. He soon became recognised as the outstanding thinker and *litterateur* of the Indian Muslims, and gradually he acquired a prestige among the middle classes which can hardly be exaggerated. By 1922 he was important enough to be knighted, and four years later to become a member of the central Legislative Council. In 1930 he was president of the Muslim League. Six lectures on Islam which he delivered in 1928-9 at Madras and elsewhere attracted wide attention, and impressed Lords Irwin and Lothian enough to have him invited to lecture at Oxford. These lectures⁴ in English were his

4. *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.
Revised edition: *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islām*.

only important prose publications, except a few polemic pamphlets ; his fame was acquired chiefly by the constant succession of his vigorous and brilliant verses, Urdu and Persian. He died in 1938, honoured by many thousands throughout India.

Muḥammad Iqbāl summoned the sleeping Muslims to awake. The bourgeoisie, already beginning to stir, heard his penetrating voice and was eager to respond. While he was still in England he wrote home to the unchanging East to arouse itself and to change. Throughout his life he devoted himself to inciting activity, to insisting eloquently that life is movement, that action is good, that the universe is composed of processes and not of static things. He bitterly attacked the attitudes of resignation and quiet contentment, the religious valuation of mere contemplation, passivity, and withdrawal from strife. The mystic (*Sūfi*) and idealist world-denying tendencies in Islam he utterly rejected, as damnable Iranian and Hellenistic importations into an originally vigorous Arabian religion. Above all, his Islam repudiated the conception of a fixed universe dominated by a dictator God and to be accepted by servile men. In its place he would put a view of an unfinished growing universe, ever being advanced by man and by God through man. Iqbāl's prime function was to lash men into furious activity, and to "imbue the idle looker-on with restless impatience."⁵ Life is not to be contemplated, but to be passionately lived. The centre of Iqbāl's significance lies here :

The pith of life is contained in action,
To delight in creation is the law of Life.
Arise and create a new world !
Wrap thyself in flames, be an Abraham !
To comply with this world which does not favour thy
purposes
Is to fling away thy buckler on the field of battle.
The man of strong character who is master of himself
Will find Fortune complaisant.
If the world does not comply with his humour,
He will try the hazard of war with Heaven ;
He will dig up the foundations of the universe

And cast its atoms into a new mould . . .

By his own strength he will produce

A new world which will do his pleasure.⁶

This call to impatient initiative is the chief revolution wrought by Iqbāl in Islamic thought. It is a necessary revolution, if Islam is to survive. For modern thinking must be dynamic, modern ethics must be positive and creative. In the society of to-day it is possible to do good and evil in numberless ways which were never possible before ; and any system which ignores them must be superseded.

Iqbāl castigated as sinful the static passivist ethics of resignation which had "misled" the Muslims. Actually that ethics is not inherently bad, but outmoded. It is appropriate to a pre-scientific society. It is bad to-day because it is anachronistic, because modern technology has advanced life to a new level. In feudal days if an only son died of cholera, what was the father to do but to resign himself, but to accept the situation with dignity? There was no value in his ranting and raging, in cursing his Fate and in making both himself and his fellow-villagers miserable. It was in any possible sense best that he should say "Allah be praised" and contemplate with courage and serenity the inscrutable working of God—i.e. of the universe. A religion which enabled him to do so was good.

To-day the situation is radically new. If a man bestir himself and have foresight, he can prevent his son's death from cholera by inoculation and hygiene. If he co-operate with his fellow-countrymen, he can build up a new creative planned society based on science and large-scale industry ; and thereby he can banish disease and much other evil from new exuberant human life. Quiet resignation, therefore, which once was good, is now bad. Iqbāl had the daring and eloquence to say that it is bad.

In Indian Islam, as in all pre-industrial cultures, there are traditions, powerful and centuries old, conditioning men to quiescence—that is, conditioning them not to take advantage of the opportunities which to-day they are offered. Observers from

the modern West are struck most of all with the poverty of the East, and secondly with its lack of initiative. The greatest service rendered by Iqbāl was his reiterated call to action in the name of Islam, his raising of action to be a virtue in itself, his bold insistence that a dynamic infidel is more righteous than a passive Muslim :

An infidel before his idol with wakeful heart

Is better than the religious man asleep in the mosque.⁷

He condemned the formalism of the pious, and despised those who rate observance of a code above creative love and energy :

I have ascertained none of the ins and outs of the Law

But this : that who denies love and passion is infidel and atheist.⁸

Many times Iqbāl wrote that for the orthodox cleric those who deny God are infidels, but that for him, those who deny their selves or the joy of life are much worse than infidels.

His activist reinterpretation of religion is well brought out in his treatment of the Adam myth, in his poem "The Subjugation of Nature" (*Taskhīr i Fīṭrat*⁹). According to this presentation, the "fall" of man was in reality "the first rung in the ladder of man's glory."¹⁰ (The basic idea may have been adopted from Bakunin.) The argument of the poem is as follows.

At the advent of Adam, a thrill runs runs through the universe. Love and Beauty, expectant, rejoice. Desire, previously lying dormant, opens its eyes to a new world. Life exuberantly finds for itself a new gateway. Satan, however, refuses to bow before Adam, for he is weak and quiescent, while Satan himself proudly proclaims his own fiery and passionate power. Then comes the temptation. Satan mocks at Adam's passivity, and taunts him with being good for nothing but prostrations and worship. With vigorous eloquence he incites him to discard the static goodness of heaven and to come forth into a creative life of struggle and daring endeavour, of restless desire and action. Adam does come forth, and instead of the fixed life of the angels, chooses to carve out a world for himself. On coming out of

7. from *Jāwīd Nāmah*, p. 40.

9. in *Payām i Mashriq*, pp. 85 ff.

8. from *Zabūr i 'Ajam'*, p. 160.

10. Akbar Ali, *Iqbal*, p. 265.

Paradise, he is conscious of the deep change. New beauties are seen, new desires sensed, and he is alive to the vast potentialities open before him. The final scene of the poem shows us Adam's defence on the Day of Judgement. It was necessary for Adam, for the full development of his personality, to fall prey to the fascination of the material world and, by submitting to it, to conquer it. He is not ashamed of his sins, his straying from the path of "virtue" while he searched for dominion over nature. But he is exultant in his achievement: boldly he recounts how by dynamic desire and never-ceasing effort he has subdued the universe of matter and made it subject to his mind and will.

Thus Iqbāl has come a long way from the accepted Islamic moral attitude. In his view, the goal of humanity is not submission but supremacy. The chief end of man is to be the Vicegerent of God on Earth.

Theologically, although Iqbāl was no theologian, he wrought the most important and the most necessary revolution of modern times. For he made God immanent, not transcendent. For Islam, this is rank heresy; but for to-day it is the only salvation. The revolution of immanence lies in this, that it puts God back into the world. Iqbāl's God is in the world, now, with us, facing our problems from within, creating a new and better world with us and through us. Religion is life. And life, this mundane material life, is religious. The present world, of matter, time, and space, is good. "All is holy ground."¹¹ The Tradition at once brings Muḥammad himself to endorse this radical reversal of ascetic dualism: "As the Prophet so beautifully puts it: 'The whole of this earth is a mosque'."¹² The traditional remoteness of God is an error:

We have strayed away from God, and He is in quest of us;

Like us He is humble and is a prisoner of desire . . .

He is hidden in every atom, and yet is a stranger to us;

He is revealed in the moonlight. . . .¹³

God himself, and all the values, rewards, ideals, and objectives

11. *Six Lectures*, p. 217.

12. *ibid.*, loc. cit.

13. from *Zabūr i 'Ajam*, pp. 132 f.

of religion become transferred to the empirical universe. Correspondingly, the will of God is not something imposed from without to be accepted resignedly, but surges within, is to be absorbed and acted upon :

In his (i.e. the true Muslim's) will that which God wills becomes lost.¹⁴

Man's place in Creative Evolution is everywhere stressed throughout Iqbāl's lectures on religious thought : "It is the lot of man to share in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him and to shape his own destiny as well as that of the universe, now by adjusting himself to its forces, now by putting the whole of his energy to mould its forces to his own ends and purposes."¹⁵ The theological aspect follows at once, with a quotation from the Qur'ān : "And in this process of progressive change God becomes a co-worker with him, provided man takes the initiative : 'Verily God will not change the condition of men, till they change what is in themselves' (13 : 12)."¹⁶ Elsewhere he says : "We are gradually travelling from chaos to cosmos and are helpers in this achievement. Nor are the members of the association fixed ; new members are ever coming to birth to co-operate in the great task. Thus the universe is not a completed act. . . . The process of creation is still going on, and man too takes his share in it, inasmuch as he helps to bring order into at least a portion of the chaos. The Koran indicates the possibility of other creators than God. (Footnote : Koran, ch. 23, v. 14 : 'Blessed is God, the best of those who create')."¹⁷

Along with these enthusiastic doctrines of immanence and creative evolution, went naturally a joyous ethical affirmation of the world and of life. The love of nature is evident throughout his poetry, passionate and religious. All the religions have gone through world- and life-denying phases, in times of social decadence or unprosperous stagnation. Iqbāl scornfully rejected these aspects from Islam as alien and evil, and insisted that his religion

14. *The Secrets of the Self*, line 1325.

15. *Six Lectures*, p. 16.

16. *ibid.*, loc. cit.

17. *The Secrets of the Self*, Introduction, pp. xvii-xviii.

said "Yes" to the material world. Desire, the ancient devil of the religious, becomes a prime good :

Keep desire alive in thy heart,
Lest thy little dust become a tomb.¹⁸

The classical Muslim mystics (*Sūfīs*), he said, and others under Greek and Persian influence, feared evil and feared the world as evil, and renounced it ; but fear of anything but God amounts to infidelity (*kufr*). "The moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation."¹⁹ "The ultimate end of all human activity is Life—glorious, powerful, exuberant."²⁰

Such a positive philosophy should repudiate dualism, as it has repudiated transcendentalism, asceticism, and ritualism. Iqbāl speaks monistically almost always, and at times explicitly rejects dualist thinking :

To say that body and mind are separate is a manner of speaking :

To see body and mind as separate is a sin.²¹

Even the dichotomy of good and evil he deemed but a convenience. He decried the ascetic dualism of Christianity, and especially its separation of sacred and secular in Church and State. He was not willing to abandon entirely a belief in immortality ; but he did his best by calling it "an aspiration : you can have it if you make an effort to achieve it."²² Thus he tries completely to reverse the old function of the immortality idea as an opiate, and to transform even it into yet another call for struggle.

Iqbāl, as we have seen, in deploring the old static other-worldliness of religion, now certainly a sin, denounced it as un-Islamic and inherently evil. He treated it as if it had always been a sin, and claimed that the Muslims' belief in it had caused their downfall and decadence after the brilliant Islamic civilisation of

18. *ibid.*, lines 271 f.

19. *ibid.*, Introduction, p. xviii.

20. "Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry," in *The New Era*, 1916, p. 251, quoted by Nicholson in Iqbāl, *The Secret of the Self*, Introduction, p. xxii, fn. 1.

21. *Zabūr i 'Ajam*, p. 216.

22. *The Secret of the Self*, Introduction, p. xxiii.

the 'Abbāsī period. This, of course, is wrong : world-denying passivity and quietist supernaturalism were not the cause of social disintegration, but the result. Religion did not take man's values out of the world and put them in heaven, but preserved them in heaven after they had been taken out of this world by the actual facts. When men found themselves in a society with the minimum of truth, beauty, justice, and exuberant life, in a world where desires were not fulfilled but brought only pain, where hunger not only was not but could not be satisfied—in life where there was neither joy nor hope ; religion gave men hope, and assured them that an inscrutable God would give them joy in the end. It insisted that the true nature of man is not fulfilled in a life of want and hardship, that human personality is greater than that which life in the then existing conditions could develop. It convinced man in the grip of nothingness that his life was, after all, significant.

Religion performing this service for mankind has been called an opiate. It could equally be called a stimulant ; for without it, man could never have carried on. Man has had in his religions, in their vision of eternity, the only thing that has kept him going through thousands of years of non-achievement. Religion has kept alive in idea the values which man could not realise in fact. It is only the astonishing ability of man to devote himself with energy to ideal values, unrealised and at the time unrealisable, that has brought the world to the place to-day where Iqbāl and we can act so as to realise them. As long as good was impossible of actual attainment, a religion which preserved that good in "another world" does not deserve our depreciation.

But when good can be really attained, then that religion which still tries to preserve good in idea, in some other world, *instead of* realising it in this world – that religion becomes reactionary and evil. It has become so attached to the metaphysical values that it actively resists the attempt to put those values back into actual life. Hence the materialists' opposition to dualist religion. Dualists imagine that monistic materialists take all the beauty and value out of the world. The truth is the exact opposite : the materialists are striving to put the beauty and

value back into the world where they belong. The dualists do not like them there, having got so used to cherishing them in the spiritual isolation of their minds.

For instance, all praise to the religious men who for centuries in the face of actual exploitation and injustice maintained the idea of brotherhood, and taught that the actual situation was ideally wrong, and that while it had to be accepted in fact, yet it should not ever be admitted as the eternal truth. But to-day there are socially conservative Muslims²³ who oppose socialism on the classic grounds that it imposes equality by force, and hence removes the possibility of the virtue which Islam teaches of the rich treating the poor with consideration and spiritual equality. Usually the opposition to progress of dualists is somewhat more subtle than this ; but all attempts, however subtle or high-sounding, to keep spiritual values spiritual in a society where they can be actualised, are, in effect, reactionary and bad. For his own day, Iqbāl was right in condemning as utterly evil all static and other-worldly religion.

It is a transcendent immutable God in whom people who do not believe in God do not believe. It is dualist, supernaturalist religion to which anti-religious people are opposed. Iqbāl, John Macmurray, the Communist Party, and all social progressives, attack traditional religion for the same reason : namely, that by diverting attention by its idealism from the real situation and the real opportunities, it to-day impedes right action.

What then is right action? What was Iqbāl's ethics? There is no clear and exact answer ; he elaborated no ethical system. In fact, he was less devoted to enunciating what one ought to do than to lashing one into doing it with all one's might. He opposed static supernaturalism or, as he called it, Platonic religion, not so much for impeding right action as for impeding any action whatever. He denounced the old quietist ethics, and pled again for vitality. As a vigorous infidel was to be preferred to a sleeping Muslim, so an activist exuberant sin even is better than formalistic virtue :

23. e.g. Ahmad Pai, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

You do not understand it, stupid ascetic,
That a single frenzied error of the heart is the envy of a
hundred prostrations.²⁴

He saw clearly enough that the static ritualism of the old-fashioned clerics and all their self-righteousness is not only stupidly meaningless—even the liberals saw that—but positively evil. He also saw that the present condition of the world—capitalist society, exploitation, disease, poverty—is bad, and that therefore contentment is wicked, conservatism is a sin. The liberals are immoral, in so far as they would leave the present order as it is.

Clearly one must do something, and vigorously. But what? It was not Iqbāl's function to say precisely what. He defined *jihād* ("Holy War") as the passion for righteousness itself. He was willing to admit that he could only create enthusiasm for the right, and that he was not equipped to give details of the plan of action. He was not an economist, a sociologist, a politician, nor, as we have said, an ethicist. Because he did not specify the way to the goal to which he summoned, people claim to be his "followers" and yet diverge utterly, from Muslim socialists to reactionaries of the deepest dye. His call to action and his prestige have been exploited by politicians; and for a time most insidiously and most successfully by the communalists. It would be gratuitous to criticise Iqbāl's lack of ethical clarity as a defect; but it must be kept in mind as a deficiency by those who think that they "follow" him, lest they be misled.

However, if Iqbāl did not raise a complete ethical structure, he definitely laid the foundations for one. He laid them deep and well. Whatever is based on them must be thoroughly different from the ethics of traditional Islam, or any pre-modern ethics; and only on such foundations as Iqbāl laid can a completely modern structure be built. He certainly did not say the last word for present-day Islam, but on the other hand what he did say must be assimilated. Any modern Muslim who would talk about religion must begin where Iqbāl left off; otherwise he is hardly worth listening to. Of course, he may not be worth listening to in any case; for Iqbāl left off sufficiently far short of

the whole truth to leave room for fascists to "follow" him and loudly to summon the Muslim middle class—using his words plus some more—to intense reaction. To these we shall return, and even shall note that Iqbāl himself sometimes abetted them. Meanwhile, we simply analyse the important steps, forward from liberalism, which Iqbāl took, and which have to be taken before one can move on from the present capitalist impasse to a world of to-morrow—whether progressive or reactionary.

Iqbāl not only called for vigorous action to change the present plight of the Indian Muslim society, but demanded something more than its transformation into another Europe. If he denounced the Oriental acquiescence in the *status quo*, he also condemned the enthusiastic achievements of the Occident :

I tasted wine from the tavern of the West—

Upon my life, it was a headache that I bought ;

I sat in company with the best of the Europeans

And found no other day so unexciting.²⁵

He had no use for those Easterners whose ambition is limited to copying the modern West. He bitterly decried the Anglicised college youth, whom he saw as not really alive, but merely existing on borrowed breath. On Kamalism he wrote :

The Turk's instrument plays no fresh tune ;

Its new is but the old of Europe.²⁶

The West has already one foot in the grave, and it cannot save the East. Its bourgeois society is simply not good enough.

Iqbāl saw the economic frightfulness of capitalism. He saw through the liberal sham of democracy, to its exploitation, and he was sensitive to the wholesale oppression of the capitalist world.

The West's republicanism is the same old instrument,
In its strings there are no tunes but those of Kaiserism.

The demon of exploitation dances in republican garb,
And you suppose that it is the fairy of liberty.

Constitutional bodies, reforms, privileges, rights,
Are sweet-tasting western soporifics.²⁷

25. from "Khidr i Risālat," in *Armughān i Hijāz*, p. 63.

26. from "Sharq o Gharb," "Sa'id Ḥalīm Pāshā," in *Jāwid Nāmāh*, p. 72.

27. from "Sultān" in "Jawāb i Khidr" in *Bāng i Darā*, p. 296.

The capitalist from the blood of workers' veins makes
himself a clear ruby ;
Landlords' oppression despoils the villagers' fields :
Revolution !²⁸

What is the Qur'ān? For the capitalist, a message of death;
It is the patron of the propertiless slave.²⁹

And so on. Similarly Iqbāl was, of course, opposed to imperialism. During the First World War, he was strongly "pro-Islamic," pro-Turkish, and wrote some bitter verses against "the enemy" i.e. Britain. Later he was an ardent Khilafatist ; some of his most passionate utterances belong to this period. He looked upon aggressive warfare as one of the horrors of modern civilisation, and he criticised "land-hungry" Holy War even in Islam. He used to say that the greatest misfortune of Islam was when it became an empire, in Damascus. Compare the modern fashion in Christianity to decry the compromise of the Christian Church when the Emperor Constantine recognised it as official.)

Iqbāl saw, or rather felt, the moral badness of capitalism and imperialism, as well as the economic suffering it inflicts. He decried the society of modern Europe out of sympathy for its victims, but also because he could not admire the spiritual attainments of even its well-to-do. Imperialism is hideous and evil, not only for the exploited but to all the world :

Though he holds sway over sun, moon, and stars,
Our Emperor is the most penniless of mankind.
His eye is fixed on the table of strangers,
The fire of his hunger hath consumed a whole world.
His sword is followed by famine and plague,
His building lays a wide land waste.
The folk are crying out because of his indigence ;
His empty-handedness causes him to plunder the weak.
His power is an enemy to all :
Humankind are the caravan and he the brigand.
In his self-delusion and ignorance

28. *Zabūr i 'Ajam*, p. 134.

29. from "Payghām i Afghānī bā Millat i Rūsiyah" in *Jāwid Nāmah*,
p. 89.

He calls pillage by the name of empire.
 Both the royal troops and those of the enemy
 Are cloven in twain by the sword of his hunger.
 The beggar's hunger consumes his own soul,
 But the Sultan's hunger destroys state and religion.
 Whoso shall draw the sword for anything except Allah,
 His sword is sheathed in his own breast.³⁰

(Shaykh Miyān Mīr Walī is speaking, of the Emperor Shāh-jahān.)

Iqbāl thought the West "materialistic" and irreligious, and deemed that its fundamental fault. With his intense interest in personality, he was naturally revolted by the helplessness of the individual under capitalism, the moral hopelessness and frustration. He spoke of the West (i.e. capitalism) as power without love, knowledge without spirit. Correspondingly, the East, specifically Islam, represented love and the spiritual life but without knowledge or power, without the creative urge. The Orient must acquire the science of Europe, and a divine discontent ; but all the rest of Westernism it must religiously shun.

The East, that holds heaven in the noose of its thought,
 Has broken from itself, and is without the fire of desire ;
 In its dark clay there is no glow of life . . .

The fire of both temple and mosque has gone out . . .
 The thinking of the West bows down before appearance ;
 Blind, it is engrossed in mere colour and perfume . . .
 By its hand our garment is torn beyond all mending.
 Bad is the East, but the West is even worse ;

The entire world is dead, and has no lust for endeavour.³¹

One aspect of Iqbāl's hatred of capitalism is his preference of love to reason. He was not intellectually a socialist. He did not know, analytically and logically, what is wrong with capitalism. But he was emotionally a socialist because he loved mankind. Therefore, he preferred emotion to intellect. He had heard too many contended rationalisations of imperialism and the *status quo*, rationalisations which his intellect could not refute,

30. *The Secrets of the Self*, lines 1369-1386.

31. *Zabūr i 'Ajam*, p. 71.

to believe in the value of intellect alone. Fatalism in Islam he deemed a doctrine brought forth to support the usurpation of power by the first Islamic empire, the *Umayyad* at Damascus; and "in our own times philosophers have furnished a kind of intellectual justification for the finality of the present capitalistic structure of society."³² The modern West has learning and intellect in abundance; but still it is capitalist. Iqbal was anti-intellectual, as one of the best of his disciples says, essentially as a revolt against modern capitalism: "He is alive to the dangers of a mental attitude which has been responsible—particularly in Europe—for unprecedented destruction and for the exploitation of man by man on an unparalleled scale. Intellect, uninspired by Love and Science, uncontrolled by faith in ethical principles (which intellect alone cannot give), have given Europe an inhuman economic system, an unjust social organisation, a bitter conflict amongst groups and classes, a craze for armaments, a perpetual threat of impending wars and, above all, a life of hurry, strain, frustration and an incapacity or distaste for the quiet enjoyment of the fruits of humane culture".³³ Not being a scientific socialist, Iqbal was at least a moral one.

Iqbal's direct utterances on socialism are varied. His writings are throughout tinged socialistically, and his sympathy was on that side. Latterly, he wrote many "socialist" poems; and he used the name and sometimes the ideas of Marx in his condemnations of the West.³⁴ But the basic fact is that he never knew what socialism is. Like most members of his class, he imagined it to be "materialist" in the dualist sense, not in the materialist sense. That is, he assumed, in this part of his thinking, that there is a dichotomy of matter and spirit, and that socialism is admittedly concerned with the former and not with the latter. He explicitly said:

Socialism has to do only with the body.³⁵
Once this misapprehension of his is realised, the rest follows

32. *Six Lectures*, p. 154.

33. Salydain, *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*, p. 112.

34. See, for example, "Kārl Mārks ki Āwāz" in *Daarb i Kalim*, p. 139.

35. from "Ishtirākīyat o Mulūkīyat" in *Jāwid Nāmah*, p. 69.

readily. He supposed socialism to be like the other Western system, capitalism, in this point of being materialist ; and felt that what it lacked was religion—that is, Islam. Apart from their godlessness and “unspirituality,” Iqbāl was sympathetic with the socialist movement and with the U.S.S.R. Towards the end of his life some of his friends were able to convince him that he really did not understand socialism, and he was, perhaps, preparing to remedy this ignorance when he died. However, even before that he was beginning to realise that Islam and socialism “both had the same ‘objective,’” and that the latter had some economic truth. In his poem *Payām ī Mashriq* (c. 1922) he had put Lenin on a level with the Kaiser in Hell ; while in the *Bāl ī Jibrīl* (1935) he has him canonised. He admitted that the U.S.S.R. was already to some extent doing God’s work unconsciously ; he derived its anti-religiousness from the degeneracy and corruption of its old Orthodox Church ; and he hoped that it would eventually turn Muslim. He latterly said “that if he were made the dictator of a Muslim State, he would first make it a socialist state”.³⁶

However, Iqbāl never got further than thinking of religion and socialism as supplementary to each other. At best he thought of them as two distinct things, of which a good society should have both. He was never able (despite his theoretical disparagement of dualism) to integrate the two ; never able to see the moral and religious implications of socialism or the correct sociological implications, to-day, of a vital religion.

Of course, he knew that religion has social implications. Apart from Iqbāl’s own passionate social sympathies, all Muslims at times must think of religion in terms of a community. Islam has almost never withdrawn from society, to concern itself exclusively with one of those non-existent “other worlds” into whose bottomless emptiness many religions have been content to pour themselves. The opening words of Iqbāl’s poem on altruism (*Rumūz ī Bekhudī*) are :

For the individual to be bound to society is a blessing ;

36. Quoted by Taseer in his Introduction to *Aspects of Iqbāl*, p. xix.

It is in community that his worth is perfected ;³⁷
and again he wrote :

An individual isolated is forgetful of higher ends ;

His strength to disintegration is inclined.³⁸

Community life supplies each person with the brake and control of other persons, and from this clash of individual with individual and from the constant struggle comes activity and growth. A hermit is a heretic.

Iqbāl had a vision of an ideal society, worth striving for. But he never quite decided whether this ideal society was a romantic world-Utopia, to be Muslim in the sense of embodying the ideals and values of religion as he conceived it ; or the empirical Muslim community as the Government of India census recognise it. In fact, he confused the two. The idealist mode of thinking, which he sometimes criticised but never abandoned, led him to suppose that the two societies were identical, or were likely to become so. In either case, he delineated the major aspects of a society which would be Utopian in the usual (and rather negative) sense. There would be in it no aggressive wars, no colour or race or class or national distinctions, no beggars or unemployed. It would be permeated by the spirit of brotherhood, social service, and a spiritual warmth.

Above all, the ideal society of the future will consist of strong personalities. In this Iqbāl was chiefly interested. Because he did not understand the determinative influence that the form of society has upon the character of its members, he was not primarily concerned with sociology. What is often considered to be his distinctive contribution to religious and ethical thought is his emphasis on the development of personality. He called for supermen. "He is acutely dissatisfied with men as they now are—inferior in calibre, limited in intellect, full of meanness and cruelty—and often raises his voice in challenging lament to God."³⁹ In other words, he has realised that it is to-day possible for man to become a greater, better, stronger, more virant person than he is or has ever been ; possible for man to lead a more

37. *Asrār o Rumūz*, p. 97.

38. *ibid.*, p. 99.

39. *Saiyidain*, op. cit., p. 101.

abundant life. Part of Iqbāl's activism is to instigate men to make this possibility actual.

In fact, he himself would sum up his entire ethics in the ideal of strong personality. "The idea of personality gives us a standard of value : it settles the problem of good and evil. That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad."⁴⁰ He scorned the old concept of virtue in the static saint, and praised the man of action, dominant, growing through struggle, wrestling with the material world and conquering it. Hence science is valuable in giving man mastery over the elements. (In his strictures of the modern West, Iqbāl carefully exempted science from depreciation. The Orient must repudiate Western society, but enthusiastically adopt Western science and the conquest of nature.) Matter is valuable in obstructing man, thus making him strive. Society is valuable in confronting man with opposing wills. Religion is valuable in purging man of fear, in exhilarating him with a divine discontent and the enthusiasm of creative power.

Iqbāl visited Mussolini in 1932. He was impressed with that dictator as an individual : the Self who had struggled with the forces around him and dominated them, conquering his environment. Iqbāl had not studied and did not at all understand the implications of Mussolini's rise to power. When these became clearer in the Abyssinian invasion, Iqbāl sang a different tune.⁴¹ Himself a victim of imperialism, he turned against the strong man who, true European, expressed his strength by mauling the countries of the East. (None the less, as a strong personality he was more to be admired than a weak personality. Iqbāl never elaborated in his ethics the extent to which it is good to curb the development of one man's personality in the interest of the fulfilment of that of his neighbour.)

The most unique individual, as well as the most creative, the strongest, the most complete, is God. And man's end is to become like God. "The Prophet said, 'Create in yourselves the

40. *The Secrets of the Self*, Introduction, p. xxii.

41. See his poem "Mussolini" in *Darb i Kalim*, pp. 151 ff. ❧

attributes of God.' . . . He who comes nearest to God is the completest person"—and then, with daring, to parry the mystics : "Not that he is finally absorbed in God. On the contrary, he absorbs God into himself."⁴² As we have seen, he boldly replaces the traditional notion of surrendering one's will to God, with the new immanence of absorbing God's will into one's own. Using Islamic terminology, Iqbāl proffers as the goal of man, as the ethical and religious ideal, the Vicegerency of God. Man is, or must become, the divine vicegerent on earth.

Iqbāl's function was to instigate man to be satisfied with nothing less.

*Iqbāl's Progressive Followers
and Other Modern Muslim Progressives*

Iqbāl's influence has been remarkably varied and widespread. Almost everyone found something in him to applaud, something which stirred him to renewed Islamic vigour. There were those, of the liberal school, who read Iqbāl and were merely proud of him—were proud that modern Islam had produced so great a man, just as they were proud that classical Islam produced a university in Cordoba ; proud without proposing to do anything about it. Others, however, were incited by Iqbāl's message to some degree of activity in the name of their Lord. They could not but see that the world about or within them was less good than it might be ; and the poet's eloquence stirred them to do something about it—and to co-ordinate their doing it, more or less precisely, with their Islam. What it was that they did was fairly much up to themselves. Iqbāl sounded the call to movement ; but the direction he left either vague or equivocal. There have been numberless middle-class Muslims throughout India whose religion was at last pried loose from its static and inconsequential bemiring at the liberal stage ; but the only thing common to them all, related directly or indirectly to Iqbāl, has been their motion.

From among these it is possible to select the socially progressive ; and they comprise a sizable group ranging from the

mildly tolerant to the most ardent and romantic socialists. Clearly, their being socially progressive cannot be said to be due simply to Iqbāl ; since some of that poet's followers have been the opposite. They have tended to progress because of their social and economic environment ; Iqbāl supplied the religious fervour or sanction. Some he has instigated to advance because they were religious ; others he has instigated to be or to stay religious who would have advanced, or were advancing, in any case.

The educated youth of Muslim India has not been unique in being on the move. It has differed from most other educated youth of the contemporary world, Muslim or otherwise, in this, that a larger section of it has been religiously conscious. (To a possible reason for this curious fact we shall return.) But, on the subject of religion, even that large section has been vague. It has not elaborated with exactness the relation between the other ideas with which it has been trying to cope, and Islam ; but it has preserved a sense of being distinctively Muslim, and an undefined feeling that Iqbāl or some such thinker has rediscovered the true Islam which is supremely adequate.

Most young Muslims recently who have been at all awake have believed that "Islam is socialism." The liberals also, we noticed, stated this tenet ; but they meant by it that the Islam already with us is socialist and excellent and that nothing more need be done. These more progressive young men, when they have said that Islam is socialism, have meant that Islam if really followed would involve a better social order than the existing one, and that they are performing a Muslim duty in setting about to construct that better one. Conceptions of just what that better order is have varied ; all have agreed that Islam is socialism, but all have not agreed what socialism is. The less one knows or thinks about Islam, the closer to real socialism one can come without abandoning (or elaborating) the notion that the two are identical. "Muslim socialists" have ranged all the way from those with a charitable feeling that the world's riches probably ought to be distributed somewhat better than they are, to a fairly radical type.

There has been a general consensus that Iqbāl was right in deprecating Muslim imperialism under the *Banū Umayyah* in eighth-century Damascus, and since. Mu'āwiyah, the first emperor, has been denounced as the corrupter of Islam ; and social backward-looking is now usually directed to the very first period of Islam (*Khilāfat al-Rāshidah*)—the brief forty years from the time that the Prophet set up his rule in Madinah until the establishment of the Damascus empire. In that period alone, it has been said, Islam was "pure," "socialistic," and simple. The emphasis on this unostentatious period has been in some ways the Muslim parallel to the Hindu apotheosis of simplicity sponsored by the anti-industrialist Gandhi. Great pride has been taken in the simple life which Muḥammad even at the height of his power shared with the other inhabitants of his infertile and comparatively poverty-stricken Arabia. The rude democracy and the absence of social stratification (appropriate to an insecure society which has no surplus wealth) has been much applauded. And a novel attention has been paid to Amos-like egalitarians from the desert who, at the magnificent court of Syria immediately after the establishment of the Empire, denounced the pomp and luxury and the *mores* of the city-dwelling rich.

It has been held that this period of Islamic history, during the rule of Muḥammad and of his first four successors, was a model of sociological excellence. There was justice for all, the poor and the dispossessed were cared for by the state, the highest and the lowest met on equality, and the law favoured no one. The poorest and the meanest Muslim had access to the government, and its sympathy; his every grievance, if just, was redressed. No one was allowed either to hoard or vulgarly to display his riches, or to use them as a ground for any moral or social superiority. In short, the period has been pictured as an ideal society, which to reproduce to-day is the highest of possible social aims.

Thus the previous applause for the splendour of Islamic culture of the third Muslim century is being supplemented, or even replaced, by an enthusiasm for the simplicity of Islamic society during its first forty years.

Clearly, this roseate picture is a romantic expression of a genuine sympathy for to-day's poor. It is the normal religious ideology of those who are prepared to take some steps to remedy the present injustice of society and who draw their inspiration from the past. However, it has inspired those who have had an emotional rather than an economic programme, in that it has looked back to a time when the poor were treated with sympathy, legal justice, and dignity, rather than looking forward to a time when, thanks to science and industry and socialism, there will be no poor.

Whatever be the form that this new religion has taken—and it has tended to become quite amorphous—one thing is clear : the contentment of the liberals has utterly gone. The older generation and the successful bourgeoisie may misunderstand or reject Iqbāl's vibrant call to smash the *status quo* and to build a new world nearer to man's desiring ; but the young are discontent, and they have absorbed the spirit which allows, or compels, them to be discontent in the name of Islam.

This younger generation, then, has been following Iqbāl in the sense that it has been somewhat religious and its religion has been somewhat progressive and was made so by Iqbāl. An older generation, of the middle, slightly "leftish" bourgeoisie, slowly suffering in the contracting capitalist order and being gradually squeezed out of its benefits, has found its discontent well expressed by reading Iqbāl's emotionally anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist sections.

A good example of the stimulus that Iqbāl could give to a mediocre liberal is seen in the case of one F. K. Khān Durrānī, a Lahore editor. In 1931 he wrote a life of Muḥammad⁴³ which is quite indistinguishable from any ordinary liberal "life" of the time : it stresses the Prophet's generosity, success, and the personal devotion due to him. Four years later, under the influence of Iqbāl, he produced another essay on Muḥammad⁴⁴ in which he did not mention his previous attempt, but he did decry in the most resounding terms all the liberal "lives" of which his own

43. Durrani, *The Great Prophet*.

44. Durrani, *Mohammed the Prophet*.

had, in fact, been typical. He saw the shallowness of the apologetic "claim . . . that the Quran contains a solution for all our ills,"⁴⁵ when the claim is not made good. He attacked the usual picture of pre-Islamic Arabia as sunk in the blackest evil, and asserted that if the Arabs had only the vices charged (adultery, drinking of wine, gambling, idolatry, animism, no belief in immortality, tribalism, maltreatment of orphans and widows), "it was a very fine country indeed,"⁴⁶ for all but the last two are, he says, minor. He pointed out that the present Indian Muslim community rates on these points as well as does any other group, yet it stands lower than any other group "because for ages we have been laying all the emphasis we could on these vices and their opposite virtues to the entire neglect of those vices and virtues upon which depends the prosperity and power of nations."⁴⁷

These vices are admittedly bad ; but there are many worse. Besides, Islam is not only "Don't's". "To be good and noble one must learn a few Do's and act upon them, for it is only by active endeavour to achieve something"⁴⁸ that we can be moral and help our nation. Faith in a hereafter, or the lack of such faith, "has little interest for the student of cultural history"⁴⁹ and little effect on society, good or bad. Idolatry of wood and stone is "not half so dangerous as those deadly idols of greed and avarice, vanity and pride, self-will," etc., of "modern Musalmans, including religious preachers."⁵⁰ Concerning tribal loyalty: "Everybody in this country seems to be willing to sell his community or his country for a title or a post, but among the unbelieving Arabs of the Days of Ignorance such black sheep were not to be found."⁵¹

"Behold !" says Durrānī with considerable satisfaction, "I have demolished bit by bit the whole accepted picture of pre-Islamic Arabia and . . . the supposed mission of the Prophet Muhammad based upon it, and it is time to build a new one."⁵² The

45. *ibid* , p. xi.

47. *ibid*.

49. *ibid.*, p. 21.

51. *ibid.*, p. 32.

46. *ibid* , p. 16.

48. *ibid.*, p. 19.

50. *ibid.*, pp. 23-4.

52. *ibid.*, p. 33.

new picture is of Muḥammad not as a messenger for Arabia particularly, but as a man with a mission to the world ; namely, to found The Modern Age. The Modern Age thus introduced is one of nationalism (he gave the Arabs surging unity under a national ideal, that of world service) ; of freedom from imperialist exploitation (Islam's conquests were unique in history in bringing liberation not slavery), and of monist thought and monist morality. Durrānī launches a sweeping attack on dualism and its accompanying ethics of suppression of the body and its inclinations. To suppress the body is to impoverish the soul, since the two are interdependent in the unity (*tawḥīd*) which Muḥammad taught. Good and evil also are relative terms; there are no absolute values. Yet "poverty . . . is an unmitigated evil, a chronic disease against which society must wage ceaseless war."⁵³

This last is admirable, and modern. It is clear that what this writer has actually done, under the guise of replacing a false picture of seventh-century Arabia with a true and modern one, is to replace an antiquated ethical system for himself with a modern and relevant one. It is refreshing to find a religious thinker whose ideas of right and wrong are as intelligent and relevant as are those of the leading non-religious people round about him. This Iqbāl has done for him ; and given him also enthusiasm for his endeavour. He wants no "pathetic piety."⁵⁴ "Go and fight, commands the Quran. Fight the devil in your own bosom first . . . and fight the evil outside. . . . Fight the devil of dirt and uncleanness in your surroundings, fight the devils of disease and poverty, fight malaria, fight plague, fight cholera, fight ignorance and illiteracy, fight the fat capitalist who defrauds and exploits the poor, fight the religious hypocrite who cheats the people under his cloak of piety, fight those who would deprive you of your birthright of free manhood. . . ."⁵⁵

This, he says, is the *jihād* ("Holy War") ; just as modern Christians would call it a "crusade".

53. *ibid.*, p. 75.

54. *ibid.*, p. 82.

55. *ibid.*

Such is the advance made under Iqbāl's influence from a staid and backward-looking liberalism. We have studied Dur-rānī not because he is influential or noble, but because he illustrates the good points and also the vices of a modern Iqbālīte. He has those vices : he pursues reactionary tendencies with the same indomitable enthusiasm that he displays for progress. For instance, his hatred of the Hindus is as fervent as only a devoted Muslim's can be, his national ideal for Islam must make the fascist leap for joy. And his determination to exclude women from all modern values is as zealous as his desire to urge men on.

The liberals had stated resoundingly that Islam is progress, Islam is naturalism, is rational, scientific, socialist. A sizable group of the new generation, discontent and activist, decided to take them at their word. To the consternation of those liberals, they took the equations seriously, and have adopted true naturalism, science, etc., in the name of Islam.

For some time they found intellectual leadership in the journal *Nigār* of Lucknow, edited by one Niyāz. His especial task was to carry to its logical conclusion the rationalism which had been introduced into the religion. It was an unhistorical rationalism, involving only static, two-dimensional logic. But it was sufficient to attack and rout the very idea of divine revelation, and to produce an Islam which had dispensed with all premisses. Accordingly, the Qur'ān was seen as a piece of literature, the personal contribution of Muḥammad to the thought of the world ; all the authority, as well as the ritual and formalism, of the religion was rejected—not only theoretically but in fact—and all that was left over was, explicitly, a religion of which the "ethical spirit" was pre-eminently valuable. Islam was not repudiated, as by the atheists ; for its heritage of ethical spirit was deemed worth while ; even though the entire content of ethical guidance for the modern Muslim be derived from purely modern considerations. Ideally, the final position was somewhat similar to that of the early Aligarh group.

Its lack of positive ideology, however, has meant that it too has soon petered out. Ethical spirit without positive guidance is

either inadequate or superfluous, in the present strenuous days ; Niyāz has fulfilled his function. He effected the transition intellectually from liberal Islam to the modern age, from *laissez-faire* ethics to stringent progressiveness. To-day, with less following, he is able to be more or less silenced.⁵⁶

Those who looked to him for guidance have become out-and-out socialists ; or amelists ; or have turned back to conservative Islam.

Another group, less involved in the intellectual aspect of the problem, but equally Islamic and equally progressive, attached itself to the Aḥrār party. This has been a movement of the lower middle classes and the well-to-do peasantry, of doers rather than thinkers ; its type of radicalism has demanded action with little time off for philosophic disquisition. We shall treat it, consequently, in our section on politics rather than here. But meanwhile we should notice that there were for a time, in its rank and file, many real Muslim socialists ; men whose love for humanity, whose passion for justice, were explicitly Muslim and pragmatically progressive. Of late years the crisis, becoming relentlessly acute, has divided this movement too ; the really progressive and perspicacious members have joined the general socialist movement—providing many of the ablest labour and peasant workers in the Punjab ; while of the rest some have been driven into other groups or into indecision, some to reaction.

To return to the intellectual plane, it is worth our noting a representative of the more progressive and more intelligently informed of Iqbāl's prominent followers. Such is the young educationist, Khwājah Ghulām Sayyidayn. He has been a forceful and candid thinker and writer ; and has been one of a smallish group of Muslim intellectuals who are not irreligious, are frankly outspoken, and are thoroughly aware.

Socially, his position has been less romantic, more accurate, than that of Iqbāl. He has realised what it is—namely, science—that makes contemporary society profoundly new, demanding a new social system, a new education, religion, ethics. Consequently he has stressed science and again science. He also has known,

56. See above, pp. 108 f.

better than Iqbāl, that it is science, applied and exploited to the full, which will enable the future to be glorious and good. He has asked for more and more of the new technology, with which man can "abolish poverty and all its attendant ills, such as ignorance, disease, insecurity"⁵⁷; and he has known that Gandhi's spinning programme, as a long-term policy, is defeatism. He is the first Muslim to recognise and explicitly to emphasise as a Muslim the supreme and revolutionary relevance of modern science to ethics.

Further, he has known what is wrong with life in Europe. He has attacked capitalism, the West's competitive organisation of society, and attacked it even in India: rather than attacking, like Iqbāl, "the West" in general and vaguely, or rather than attacking, like Iqbāl, one outcome of capitalism, the "materialist" outlook. He has known that imperialist wars, exploitation, and spiritual frustration are the result not of immorality and irreligion, but of capitalist economics. He has recognised that to produce the good personalities for which Iqbāl pled, one must ask: "What is the social order which will favour and stimulate the growth of such an individual?"⁵⁸ He has been the first Muslim to recognise and emphasise the determinative influence on character of the social and economic system. No other religious writer in Islam has come anywhere near to noticing that human nature can be changed by act of parliament.

It is true that Sayyidayn's economics is not succinct. His attacks on capitalism and his appeals for a better, co-operative, order have not been founded on an exact economic analysis. If they had been, they would doubtless have been forcibly suppressed by the government. And without the economic aspect, the arguments are laid open to misinterpretation. Without analysis, there is the danger that fascism will be mistaken for the new social order that is called for to supersede capitalism. Because Sayyidayn has been far more exact, far less romantic, than Iqbāl,

57. Saiyidain, in the 1941 Bakhshi Ram Rattan Foundation Lecture, on *Education for a Better Social Order*, Hans Raj Lall, Lahore, 12 February, 1941.

58. Saiyidain, *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*, p. 164.

this possibility is less imminent. With Iqbāl, as we shall see, the poet himself at times, and the great majority of his "followers" have made this mistake, and his poetry has been ardently exploited in support of a fascist movement. The middle classes throughout the world, just because they will not understand the economic system, have shown themselves ever ready to be seduced, by moral and religious arguments that they do understand, into a reactionary position. The economic argument for socialism is not sufficient to win them ; and yet other arguments by themselves have throughout the world shown themselves in a crisis not sufficient to keep them won. Whether appeals such as Sayyidayn's, because they are not economic as well as moral, will be pressed into fascist service in the end, remains to be seen. So far, Islam as a religion has produced no writer whose recognition of the necessity of socialism is both economic and ethical.

Consequently Sayyidayn has been one of the few progressives appealing to the middle classes in middle-class terms. He has been acutely aware of the stupidity and the moral loathsomeness of capitalism ; and he has pointed them out with scorn. Not only does competitive society produce major evils from time to time, such as war, but it is bad throughout; and it must go. "For every hundred persons who realize the horror of war, how many realize the horror of the slum ? For every hundred who see the futility of war, how many see the futility of much of peace ?"⁵⁹ The stress laid on acquisitive motives within capitalism "is immoral and psychologically bad."⁶⁰ The perversion of personality, the frustration, the meaninglessness of life, the individual hopelessness, the fear, worry, and insecurity, the mutual competition and antagonism—all these products of capitalism are evil. Anyone who supports such a system is wicked. Similarly the "over-production," the destruction of commodities, the poverty in the midst of plenty, the wars—all these things are also stupid. Anyone who supports such a system is dull and unintelligent.

On the other hand, Sayyidayn, inspired by Iqbāl, and understanding the potentialities of science, has looked forward to a

59. At the afore-mentioned lecture.

60. *Ibid.*

new social order in which man shall develop gloriously and flourish. The new personality which Iqbal proffered for attainment shall be attained : the strong and life-affirming individual ; courageous, tolerant, disciplined ; free, active, and powerful ; and dedicated to the service of God, with whom and with its fellow-men it shares the task of creating a better world. This ideal is not impossible of achievement, provided society is reconstructed—with co-operation instead of competition, production for use instead of production for profit, more equal distribution, and the full exploitation of technology—and provided education is reconstructed.

The possibility of attainment of this and similar ideals means that not only the workers and peasants stand to gain from socialism, but also the middle classes ; and they stand to gain not only economically, but aesthetically, morally, spiritually, and every other way that they claim to prize.

Education is Sayyidain's field, and his efforts have been bent to reconstructing it for the new society. Most observers realise that the government's educational system in India is ludicrously bad. But few have expressed it better than he. "Our education . . . is designed—consciously as well as unconsciously—to instil in the minds of the youth an attitude of selfish grab and to substitute for its idealism and selflessness a mean desire to fight for petty jobs and secure them at the cost of everything else, however precious ; and when in this mad struggle a few manage to gain offices or a little of the riches of the world they lose their humanity in the process and the spirit in them turns into stone."⁶¹ This education is run on the fear motive, and is based on pettiness and the most arid intellectualism ; and at best is "gives children the already known solutions of already formulated problems."⁶² Clearly, a fundamental change in education is necessary--involving a totally new outlook ; and in method, an approach to creative activity, the Project Method, and the development of the educand by free but co-operative experience in

61. Saiyidain, *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*, p. 130.

62. Afore-mentioned lecture.

meeting actual situations. The new philosophy calls an end to the old dualism of matter and spirit, and the new education must abolish the one-sidedness of intellectualism, rather using the physical world as the material for realising spiritual values. These values themselves must form part of the new system, for it must achieve an integration of intellect and love. We must not have the isolated intellect whose unbridled power has ruined modern Europe; nor yet the unintelligent "well-meaningness" of traditional religion. "Life is not a mechanical routine but a creative art. The capacity to think intelligently and critically is not a philosophic luxury but an imperative duty in to-day's society."⁶³ "Can education have a higher, and dare it remain content with a lower, ideal than this of discovering God in man and building up a world worthy of his habitation?"⁶⁴

This is Iqbal's philosophy applied, and applied exceedingly well. Religiously, Sayyidain is interesting and significant because religiously also his position is that of Iqbal, applied, carried to its logical outcome. The religion of persons like Sayyidain is in actuality what Iqbal proclaimed that religion ought to be.

And yet persons like Sayyidain are not obviously religious persons at all.

Herein lies the crux of to-day's religious problem; herein we see the crisis which Islam has reached in Iqbal. For Sayyidain has done nothing that a secularist might not have done, has said nothing that an atheist, with the slightest change of vocabulary, might not have said. Certainly his position is indistinguishable from what the position of a Christian or a Hindu, if they were intelligent enough, and modern enough, and good enough, might be. Sayyidain says of Iqbal, "for him, the . . . difference between a *m'umin*⁶⁵ . . . and a *kāfir*⁶⁶ . . . is not a narrow theological difference but one of fundamental attitudes towards life—namely, whether he does or does not develop all his capacities and use them for the conquest and remaking of the world in the

63. *ibid.*

64. Sayyidain, *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*, p. 201.

65. *mu'min* : believer.

66. *kāfir* : unbeliever, infidel.

name of the Lord"⁶⁷ ; followed by appropriate questions. Iqbāl said this, but he was never able actually to think it : for instance, in his dispute with the modern heretical Aḥmadiyah Movement, he applied not this "fundamental" criterion, to decide who was a Muslim and who not, but the narrow and traditional theological one ; and when he suggested a separate state for the "Muslims" of north-western India, he meant by "Muslims" not the creatively righteous, but what everybody else meant. Men like Sayyidāyn, however, quote Iqbāl's remark, and really take it seriously. Consequently, they are not communalists, but socialists.

Iqbāl brought Islam face to face with the crisis, but no one yet has expressly stated it as such. It is the world crisis facing all religions to-day. It lies in the fact that the objective conditions of the modern world are so radically new that to act religiously, to realise objectively and actually the values at which the religions have constantly aimed, means to act in a way that is no longer recognisably—that is, nominally—religious. To choose real righteousness is to spurn imagined morality. This fact Iqbāl recognised ; but he did not see the crisis that it involves. The world is so basically new that it is no longer possible to have both the substance and the appearance of any religion. The facts to-day are so different from what they have ever been, that to be a Muslim—or Christian—in fact is so different from being a Muslim or Christian in name, that to preserve the name is either meaningless or contradictory.

Once the crisis has been reached, the religious men split into two groups. The progressives, religious and righteous in fact, go on their way regardless of whether their acts and attitudes are superficially Muslim—or Christian or whatever. They join the anonymous ranks of the creatively good men, and become lost to the institution of religion. The others, who choose to maintain religion in idea, to be nominally and recognisably Muslim, etc., become the reactionaries. As the crisis recedes into the past, the progressives become less and less nominally religious, and the conservatives become less and less really good.

Those who are ideally religious, clinging to the outward forms of Islam, we shall study in our next chapter. The progressives, the truly religious according to Iqbāl's definition, are less and less accessible to our study. Our present survey cannot concern itself with those who have no explicit connection with Islam, even though they be righteous in the modern Muslim sense. It may be inherently Islamic to work for the development of free, strong personalities and for a better world ; but as long as those so doing are not conscious of its being Islamic, the outside observer has no scientific reason for classifying them within the religion. Sayyidayn is included simply because he explicitly follows Iqbāl, and gives Islamic illustrations to his argument occasionally. How superficial is the distinction appears in the fact that others equally devoted but not equally explicit are necessarily left out. Similarly with the actually righteous who are nominally Hindu, etc.

These "Muslim" progressives who are not religious in idea, but who are what certain ideally-advanced Muslims would theoretically recognise as religious in fact, constitute a field in which research remains to be done—in Islam as in other religions. From among the actually progressive, from among those who are consecratedly working for a better world for mankind, whether they describe themselves as atheists, agnostics, or amelists, one might profitably discover what percentage has passed through a stage of nominally religious fervour. Their present, nominally even anti-religious, passion for righteousness in fact might thus be the outcome or realisation of a prior religious idealism. (We have already noticed that in the Punjab, a goodly number of the men actually working for righteousness reached their present position by way of the Ahrār party's Muslim progressiveness.) Islam as a religion has produced so far no intellectual modernisation of its idea of righteousness more explicit than Iqbāl's, more sociological than Sayyidayn's. It has produced no comprehensive and adequate treatment of the relation between Islam and socialism. Nevertheless, in fact Islam as a community has produced many comprehensive and adequate socialists. What precisely is the factual relation between their Islamic back-

ground and their socialistic ardour has not been determined.

The intellectual crisis in Islam, in fact in all the religions, that we have been considering, has been bitterly acute ; it has forced a painful division, among the aware, of the sheep and the goats. The social and economic crisis in Islam, in fact in all the world, has been equally acute, and more pressing; we shall study it carefully in our section on Muslim politics. Our present discussion we conclude by noting that there is a further group of progressive Muslims : those whose activities are progressive but who are intellectually not advanced enough to have perceived the religious crisis. Some are doing modern good deeds, but preserve in their minds the religious ideology of a much earlier period—either through mental departmentalisation, or through that common foible, inconsistency. They are religious and they are progressive ; but they are not religiously progressive. Politically they are important, and we shall find them again in our political discussions.

In some cases, they follow politically a leader whose religion is more advanced and more co-ordinated than their own.

There is a group of religious liberals who are politically progressive, sometimes even socially progressive, and who to a varying degree still see their progressiveness as the expression of their liberal religion. Some of these have recently had a chance to express themselves in trying to liberalise the new Muslim nationalism which has seemed of late to be emerging out of the previously reactionary and anti-nationalist Muslim League ; should India become free, and a separate free Pakistan emerge, they would have the opportunity to work for a true Islamic liberalism and a truly liberal Muslim state. Some have been the Congress Muslims and Nationalist Muslims. We shall be noting them in our politics section. They have interpreted Islam as meaning brotherhood and social justice, and have acted progressively in the political paths that would lead towards these goals. The nationalists could look for a leader to the present (1940 ff.) president of the Congress, Mawlānā Abul Kalām Āzād, one of the outstanding men in Islam and India to-day. For thirty years he was the principal leader of those who wished

to put liberal Islam into practice. Because he has been even more important as a politician than as an intellectual, we shall reserve him for treatment under Islamic politics. But he is an eminent and thoroughly profound scholar of Islam and of religion ; his scholarship being liberal in the very best sense, and remarkably exhaustive. He has a place in the front rank of the classic theologians ; he is also among the foremost of the moderns. Probably no other Muslim in the country is equally intelligent, aware, informed, and at the same time a theologian. His Islam is humanitarian. He takes its humanitarianism seriously ; and acts upon it. He refuses to deduce modern ideas directly from the Qur'ān ; but by applying the "eternal spirit" of the Qur'ān to modern problems, he arrives at second remove at the politics which for thirty years has placed him among the most important of his country's progressive leaders.

A Note on the Jāmi 'ah Millīyah Islāmīyah

When at last India becomes a free and progressive nation, a great deal of its present educational system will have to be scrapped at once. For it is almost irrelevant to freedom, and only remotely allied to progress. But there is at least one institution of Muslim education in India both independent and advanced ; of outstanding significance now, in its difficult struggle to elaborate and practise a new education within the prevalent oppressive atmosphere of the old ; and to be, surely, of outstanding importance later, when, with a new society, the new education will not only have a chance to flourish, but will be suddenly called upon to flourish rapidly and far. This institution is the Jāmi 'ah Millīyah Islāmīyah (Islamic Community University) at Delhi, familiarly known simply as "the Jāmi'ah".

It was founded at Aligarh in 1920—that is, in the days of the Khilāfat and Non-Co-operation movements, in days of unlimited dreams and fervent determination, of enthusiastic nationalism. It was a secession movement from the official, imperialist-entangled Muslim university of the Sir Sayyid Ahmad tradition ; students and some teachers "non-co-operated" by leaving the government-supported and controlled university, and under a group of tents they set up a courageous but obviously

improvised rival, thoroughly nationalist and free. Three trends united in bringing this novelty into being. Mawlānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan, principal of India's foremost Muslim theological seminary, represented the pure Islamic educational and religious elements; Muḥammad 'Alī, the politician, Khilafatist leader, prime mover of the scheme and first principal of the Jāmi'ah, stood for the politically progressive Muslim liberal enthusiasm, the opposition to the British and to their acolyte the official Aligarh university, and the vision of a new, free, creative Islam; while Gandhi, the Hindu, the Congressite, backing the new venture, typified Hindu-Muslim unity and ardent (and religious) Indian nationalism.

The Jāmi'ah, thus born in the throes of 1920 enthusiasm, was able, surprisingly, to survive the collapse of that enthusiasm, the collapse of the Khilāfat, Non-Co-operation, and Hindu-Muslim unity movements, the collapse of nationalism. It has survived the schism whereby religious intellectuals turned communal and reactionary, progressive intellectuals turned agnostic. It has persisted under severe difficulties; but somehow it has advanced and developed, until now it flourishes, rather quietly no doubt, but well. In 1925 it was moved from Aligarh to near Delhi; this marked the end of the spirit of pure opposition to Aligarh and the government. In its new site, where it is gradually building up an extensive and remarkably beautiful home for itself, it has embarked on a more positive programme.

The Jāmi'ah has been constantly growing, ever refurbishing its methods, and branching out from time to time to meet new needs. It has been elaborating an education that would put into practice latest methods, ideals, and discoveries of the modern West, and at the same time be thoroughly relevant to the unique conditions obtaining in India. Its education has aimed at being, and has been, progressive, Indian, and Muslim. Among its able staff, the most eminent is the present principal, Dr Dhākir (Zākir) Ḥusayn. He is a good worker, a good scholar, a good teacher, and a first-class educationist. In fact, the institution has been almost precariously indebted to this one man's personality and obvious excellence, for its survival of various difficulties. His

chairmanship of the Wardha Basic National Education Committee brought a well-substantiated fame both to himself and to the Jāmi'ah.

The full course of studies offered extends over fourteen years. There is a kindergarten and primary school (six years), a secondary school (six years), and a university (two years). All teaching, except that of English, which is a compulsory subject throughout, is done in Urdu. In the primary department, the system of education is based on the Project Method and on the Wardha scheme of Basic National Education, with its emphasis on (Indian) arts and crafts. It attempts to develop, not to thwart, individual initiative and spontaneity, and group co-operation, to integrate physical and mental development, to have the child learn by doing—and to laugh while learning. And so on.

The secondary school, the last two years of which correspond in standard to the first two of the official universities, has a curriculum not basically different from that of the government-controlled schools. The most important divergence in subject-matter is that the study of Islam is an essential part of the course. (For the few Hindu students, the study of Hinduism and Sanskrit is substituted.) Further, there is provided enough manual work (carpentry, book-binding, a printing press, a minor chemical industry, etc.) and other activities, like sports, to give the students a healthy respect for manual labour, and to save them from the clerical intellectualism of the usual onesided school boy. Otherwise, the differences are in method. The appeal is to initiative instead of to fear. The objective is accomplishment rather than the passing of examinations by rote. Gradually, the Dalton Plan of individual assignment is being introduced. This method is being delayed by the absence in Urdu of the requisite abundance of literature in the various subjects. But the Jāmi'ah, nothing daunted, is itself proceeding, as are a few other bodies, to publish books and material; and already it has been able to adopt the assignment plan in Urdu and mathematics.

The university section nowadays has few students; it is able to offer only one course, comprising, and co-ordinating, Islamic, the Social Sciences, and English. The distinction of immediate

practical importance between this course and those offered by the other universities of India, is that the former leads to a degree which does not qualify its holder for government service; nor, in practice, for certain other fields of employment. This is why there are few students. But herein the Jāmi'ah, in the words of one of its staff, "really confers a great benefit on those whom it thus debars from 'a good career,' because it redeems them body and soul from the thralldom of an ignoble ideal, and, in the words of Rousseau, 'forces them to be free.'"⁶⁸ The course, given in the students' mother tongue, aims at a critical appreciation of contemporary society, and at the inspiration of that appreciation, and of religion, to social service and responsible co-operative citizenship.

In addition to its school and university, the Jāmi'ah now has several other important departments. One is its Teachers' Training Institute, with a model school in the neighbouring village; here teachers are trained in the Wardha Scheme of Basic National Education, designed for the villages. Some day the demand on this institute will be overwhelming. Another venture recently undertaken is Adult Education; its objectives are to prepare a syllabus of adult education, primarily for literacy and religious teaching, to prepare material for that education, and to establish centres for carrying it on. The "Urdu Academy" is another, and very influential, department of the Jāmi'ah. Principally through this, a very substantial contribution is being made to Urdu literature. The Jāmi'ah, besides its literary monthly the *Jāmi'ah*, is continually publishing works in Urdu, translations and originals. They are selected partly as material for the Jāmi'ah's own courses given in that language; but the publications also reach a wide outside market and are of much more than academic value. The corresponding translation work of the wealthy 'Uthmāniyah university is plentiful, and the staff of the Jāmi'ah say that they could not function without 'Uthmāniyah's work. However, the standard maintained by the Jāmi'ah's translations is unmistakably higher; 'Uthmāniyah's work is useful, the Jāmi'ah's is both useful and good. And the original public

cations of the latter are of a decidedly superior quality; they constitute one of the important sources of Urdu literature at the present time. Particularly interesting is the production of Urdu literature for children : this is virtually a virgin field, to which the Jāmi'ah devotes a monthly periodical⁶⁹ and a fair share of its own book publications, as well as paying special attention to making available in its excellent bookshop as large a collection of suitable works for children as it is possible to muster. Here in the Jāmi'ah is meeting, almost single-handed, an important and pressing need.

Naturally, the institution is not without its defects and deficiencies. Chiefly, it is not "left" enough ; not close enough to socialism. Because of this, even its religion suffers ; even the admirable efforts being made to co-ordinate it with life are no longer able to co-ordinate it with completely modern life. For the same reason also, the Jāmi'ah is losing something of its social dynamic ; this is inevitable as the social crisis deepens, with those who are not radical enough. What used to be its deliberate social progressiveness has been turned by the newer, more critical circumstances from its former ardour. Even its nationalism is now little more than an absence of those prejudices and perversions without which any Indian is naturally a nationalist.

None the less, the Jāmi'ah's educational system remains one of the most progressive and one of the best in India.

*Chapter Four**

THE MOVEMENT IN FAVOUR OF A NEW CULTURE OF THE FUTURE : REACTIONARY

Iqbāl the Reactionary

Iqbāl said of the classical Muslim thinker 'Irāqī : "He was unable to see the full implications of his thought partly because he was not a mathematician and partly because of his natural prejudice in favour of the traditional Aristotelean idea of a fixed universe."¹ Of Iqbāl we can say that he himself was unable to see the full implications of his thought partly because he was not an economist and partly because of his natural prejudice in favour of the traditional Platonic idea of a primarily spiritual universe. This inability to carry his thought to its correct conclusions led him into innumerable reactionary potentialities and several reactionary actualities ; and recently a full-fledged fascist tendency took advantage of these same errors to represent itself successfully as his following.

He himself admitted, as we have noticed, that he did not know the economic and sociological details of the better society for which he pleaded. In fact, he was ignorant not only of the details but of the broadest sociological outlines. In order to achieve anything valuable, it is important to know how to achieve it. Iqbāl stirred the Muslims and pointed out to them the goal ; but not being aware of the path to it, he left himself and his followers open to being misled by anyone interested in misleading them provided he could talk the same jargon. To-day events have been moving rapidly through a crisis, and the whole force of the old order has been directed to confusing the people and to promising them Utopia in idea while working in fact for reaction. At such a time it is not good enough merely to have

*All references in Chapter Four are to Iqbal's writings unless otherwise stated.

1. *Six Lectures*, p. 191.

the right ideals.

Iqbāl's ignorance of economics and sociology led him to mistake what forces and groups in India, in Islam, and in the world were working to realise the values that he upheld. He actually opposed and decried those forces and groups ; and actually supported and praised the forces working against his values. For instance, for years he opposed Indian nationalism and the Indian National Congress. (Basically, he opposed them because he was vaguely aware that the Congress is essentially a capitalist organisation, and Indian nationalism essentially a bourgeois enthusiasm. His hatred of bourgeois life and of modern capitalism was—on the theoretical plane—so intense that he was at once repelled ; nothing within capitalism could attract him, not even long enough to let him see through it to the next phase.) He accepted a knighthood from the British in 1922. He refused to recognise, even when they were pointed out to him,² divergent classes within the Islamic community with conflicting interests; and he supported the organisation of Muslim landlords and contented social conservatives. He attended the Round Table Conference in London, 1931, helping to bolster Whitehall's devices to keep India in subjection. (Yet he soon saw the fraud of this, and attended few of the meetings) He deprecated the pitiful decadence of the West, and, seeing some sham in capitalist democracy, was led to condemn democracy as a system, and looked to a dictator-saviour to rescue society. "In Germany Hitler has founded a new era."³ And so on—he played well with modern ideas ; but he just did not know what was going on in the world about him in fact, and rushed headlong into the arms of the silver-tongued reactionaries.

Iqbāl's mind was simply incapable, apparently, of dealing with men in community. He was excellent in thinking about the individual ; but he floundered badly when he approached questions of society, the relations of many individuals to one another. He certainly tried to think about such questions ; and

2. For instance, by Nahrū in *The Modern Review*, 1935 (vol. LVIII).

3. Quoted by Anwar Beg, *The Poet of the East*, p. 130.

wrote a whole poetical treatise on the subject.⁴ But every attempt was a failure ; he himself, the poet, knew that he was not at all at home with practical complex affairs. We have seen, for instance, that with his magnificent ethics of individual development, he had no solution for the conflict of personality with personality, for the problem of one man's development at the expense of another's exploitation. He more than once let himself be found in positions that had fascist implications. And yet it would be an utter travesty to see in him a fascist ; for fascism, though he may not have known it, is the veriest contradiction of the development of individual personality that he championed. He did not know, and could not make himself visualise, what followed, in terms of society, from the truths that he enunciated.

Secondly, most of his mistakes may be related to a fundamental idealist attitude, of which, try as he might, he was never able to rid himself. He preached against (philosophic) idealism, and he is great because he achieved in theory a realist religion. But he never achieved it in practice. His intense interest in spiritual values diverted his attention from the fact (which he theoretically proclaimed) that spiritual values result from certain material realities, and can be attained only through these. Deeming the result more important than the cause, he was confused into acting as though it were also prior. His universe being principally spiritual, he trained his traditional prejudice that it is primarily so.

Iqbāl has been criticised as an unoriginal thinker ; it is pointed out that much of his philosophy is but an Islamicisation of, particularly, Nietzsche and Bergson. Of course, anyone familiar with modern European thought must readily detect in Iqbāl's ideas the Western sources. But this, however true, constitutes in itself no adverse criticism. One should rather applaud the exquisite artistry—itself original enough—with which he adapted his religion to these ideas. Besides, it is more important that a man's ideas be true or relevant than that they be novel. And especially in religion : if thinkers can combine their reli-

giousness with advanced secular thought, they have already done more than most observers expect of them. What is, however, significant about Iqbāl's borrowing of thoughts from the West, is that it buttressed his idealism. He derived thoughts from thoughts, rather than directly from objective conditions; he had the right ideas, but did not realise what were the concrete facts that made them right. Iqbāl's thinking was dynamic because he knew modern philosophy, not because he knew modern science (like Bergson), or modern society (like Marx).

He repeatedly affirmed that it did not matter so much what a man said, as what he did; that people are good or bad in practice, not in creed. Yet he himself judged men and movements not by their actions but by their professions. For example, he attacked the U.S.S.R. and the Communist Party because they are "atheist" and, he inferred, lack entirely the warmth and the spiritual values of religion. By this criticism he did not mean that in their actions the communists deny God—that is, deny love, deny brotherhood and justice, deny life and the human self and its development and creativity and joy and beauty. His point was that they theoretically deny God; and he never took the trouble to see whether or not they really do so. No Muslim and no socialist has arisen yet to point out in so many words that whatever the capitalist Muslims may say about it and whatever the atheistic socialist may say about it, the socialist movement is in fact the only force in the world to-day which will conserve and realise the values that Islam cherishes. Iqbāl, the most progressive of the Muslims, was misled from recognising this fact by what the socialists say. (The socialists are in general misled from recognising or stating it, by what religious people, including Iqbāl, do.)

Again, Iqbāl identified the Congress with the native princes of India, on the grounds that both are predominantly Hindu in theoretic religion.⁵ Instead of examining the activities of the princes and the activities of workers, peasants, industrialists, petty bourgeois, etc., and grouping people according to

5. *Presidential Address to the All-India Muslim League, Allahabad Session, December, 1930*, p. 17.

what they do, he interpreted Indian politics in terms of what people believe (or say that they believe).

In the above analysis, in which he called the Indian princes tools of British imperialism, he conveniently forgot that the most important of the princes, the Nizām of Hyderabad, is most decidedly (in theory) a Muslim. Similarly, when Nahrū (Nehru) pointed out⁶ that the Agha Khan was both utterly heretical in religion and imperialistically reactionary in politics, Iqbāl considered it a sufficient answer⁷ to quote His Highness's testifying to Islam's simple creed and making one or two other orthodox remarks.

Compare his attitude on Europe. He could denounce its capitalist system; but at times he spent his energy on denouncing rather the result, its frustration and soullessness, its "materialist" outlook and its irreligion. That is, he inveighed against what Europeans were thinking and saying and feeling; instead of against what they were doing, namely, practising a bad economic system. This would have been less serious, had it not eventuated in his inveighing in Muslim India against the Europeanisation of morals and viewpoint, and hence forced him at times into a conservative traditionalism in reaction; instead of decrying the economic order, thus keeping himself always socially progressive. His opposition to "Westernism" instead of to capitalism left him a prey to anti-liberal reactionaries.

Of Iqbāl's able *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, the least good lecture is the last, in which he comes to the question of what should be done about the new ideas. He is most venturesome, most modern, most excellent, when he is enunciating principles. But on particular cases, he is apt to falter. He is thoroughly in favour of *ijtihād*, the right of reinterpretation of the Canon Law—theoretically; but on the specific questions of women, Islamic customs of eating and drinking, and so on, he hesitates to innovate. This closing chapter, on the application of his principles, contains the book's

6. Nehru, "His Highness the Aga Khan," *Modern Review*, vol. LVIII, no. 5 (November 1935), pp. 505-7.

7. *Islam and Ahmadism*, p. 47.

only pleas for conservatism : while changing do not neglect the past ; conservatism also has its value. Especially "in a society like Islam the problem of a revision of old institutions becomes still more delicate, and the responsibility of the reformer assumes a far more serious aspect."⁸ When it came to action, Iqbāl went forward slowly. . . .

In spite of all that he said, he actually condemned people who prepared to do anything religiously radical. In fact, he wished that the government would suppress them. "I very much appreciate the orthodox Hindus' demands for protection against religious reformers in the new constitution. Indeed this demand ought to have been first made by the Muslims."⁹ He called for governmental intervention even against the new Ahmadiyah sect in Indian Islam, whose heresy is theoretical. And, despite his evolutionary philosophy, he attached great importance to a static insistence on the finality of Islam—as a social system never to be superseded; and in practice, never to be even improved. Consequently, he can be found upholding the Canon Law and condemning the moderns who would not practise it in full; he would win them back to orthopraxy. The first stage in the process of self-development, he said, is Obedience; and he took this to mean obedience to the traditional code of Islam:

Whoso would master the sun and stars,
Let him make himself a prisoner of Law! . . .
The start moves towards its goal
With head bowed in surrender to a law . . .
O thou that art emancipated from the old Custom
Adorn thy feet once more with the same fine silver chain!
Do not complain of the hardness of the Law,
Do not transgress the statutes of Mohammed!¹⁰

The second stage is Self-Control; and to attain it Iqbāl recommended the traditional five-pillared discipline of Islamic ritual. Further, society even more than the individual must observe

8. *Six Lectures*, p. 232.

9. Iqbāl, quoted by Nehru, "Orthodox of all Religions, Unite!" *Modern Review*, vol. LVIII, no. 6 (December 1935), p. 627 ; and not denied in Iqbāl's answer (*Islam and Ahmadism*).

10. *The Secrets of the Self*, lines 831 f., 835 f., 845-848.

these traditions for the sake of its strength and development.

Follow the path of thy ancestors, for that is solidarity;

The significance of religious conservatism is the integration of the community.¹¹

He felt that this was particularly true of a period of social transition. Discretion and reinterpretation of the Law (*ijtihād*) is excellent; but only when there is security and safety¹² and a stable society. "He felt that society, while passing through a stage of change, was liable to lose connection with past culture and civilisation. For this reason, Iqbāl was never tired of emphasising the value of remembering the past: . . .

Yea, it is true; I keep my eyes on ancient times,

And tell the members of the Assembly the old story."¹³

This curious position, that during a time of change and social disintegration, *taqlīd* (accepting the traditional authoritarian code) is better than an otherwise laudable *ijtihād* (using one's own discretion), is another wording of the proposition that one may change social forms at will provided one does not do so when social forms are being changed. One such time is, of course, the present. It means again that Iqbāl was happier about talking of innovation than about seeing innovations practised.

His attitude on this point betrays him as sharing the conservative liberal fear that Islam as an institution, an ideal form, may disappear.

This brings us to the point at which both his religion was most idealist, and his politics most disastrous; namely, communalism. He deprecated nationalism, after he saw its disreputable outcome in Europe; and he yearned for a worldwide society of brotherhood and peace. In many of his poems he addressed "the world" and not only Muslims; and his vision was certainly as inclusive as humanity. None the less, one could cite point after point in which he was in fact communal; and certainly he was exploited most loudly and most successfully by

11. from "Rumūz i Bekhudī" in *Asrār o Rumūs*, p. 143.

12. Bashir Ahmad Dar, *Iqbāl's Philosophy of Society, an exposition of Rumūz i Bekhudī*, p. 112.

13. Anwar Beg, op. cit., p. 293.

the communalists. He rebutted the charge, when it was laid against him: "The object of my Persian Poems is not to 'plead' for Islam. Really I am keenly interested in the search for a better social order ; and, in this search, it is simply impossible to ignore an actually existing social system the main object of which is to abolish all distinction of race, caste and colour."¹⁴ This statement of his motive was no doubt true, and shows the ideal basis of his communal attitudes. He visualised a world brotherhood, and supported Islam as a community because Islam as a religion preached world brotherhood. Whether that community was in fact tending towards a worldwide united society, or whether other social forces might in fact be working to that end equally or more, did not occupy his attention. The objective fact that communalism in India of his day was the most divisive of all superficial movements, did not deter him. Because Islam has the ideas of world fraternity, of social justice, etc., he deemed that Islam should be supported.

This idealist fallacy vitiated his thinking throughout. We have already noticed that he theoretically defined Islam as dynamic righteousness; but in practice he defined it as a given Indian community which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is Muslim in the sense of comprising individuals whose parents were Muslim in somewhat the same sense. Iqbāl said, and only the bigoted could dispute the saying, that to take Islam to-day seriously, intelligently, progressively, is to recognise as righteousness not the lip-service to the name of God, or the name of Islam, nor yet the formal practice of an outworn ritual, but the actual creative and value-realising activity of progressive and vibrantly good men everywhere. He said that the intellectual denial of God may be an intellectual error; but to deny life and love is sin. That is, Iqbāl has the wit to recognise that there is a company of men who are "really Muslim," and that this is not necessarily the same group as those who are Muslim in name. The first group surely comprises socialists, communists, hearty pagans, "atheist" medical doctors, Hindu famine-relievers, Christian sanitary engineers, whoever is doing good. The second

14. Iqbāl, quoted in Saiyidain, *Iqbāl's Educational Philosophy*, p. 166.

group comprises all those persons in India, of whatever character, who are not nominally or traditionally Hindu, Christian, Sikh, or "other". Iqbāl loved Islam, and felt a profound loyalty to it. But when faced with two communities, the one "really" Muslim according to his own definition and the other nominally so, he applied his loyalty to the latter. He was again preferring ideas to facts.

This is the religious crisis. And thus was the noblest of visionaries of to-morrow's just and worldwide brotherhood turned by it into the champion of the most retrograde and hate-disseminating sectionalists.

His religious idealism becomes explicit, and its social obscurantism pronounced, in his Seventh Lecture, a new chapter that he added in the second, Oxford, edition of his prose work on religious modernism.¹⁵ In this chapter, he joins the happy group of modern theologians who think that Einstein, Heisenberg, and Bohr have furnished unimpeachable proof that Kant's "thing-in-itself" is not knowable through science, but is through religion. He has deserted his religious realism and pragmatic morality to define religion now as a method of establishing direct contact with the inner nature of reality. Religion is thus "a higher form of experience"¹⁶ than science, the latter being "merely" pragmatic. Allowance being made for his idealist vocabulary, he is correct in saying: "Science does not care whether its electron is a real entity or not. It may be a mere symbol, a mere convention Science can afford to ignore metaphysics altogether."¹⁷ But he goes on: "The religious and the scientific processes, though involving different methods, are identical in their final aim. Both aim at reaching the most real. In fact, religion, for reasons which I have mentioned before, is far more anxious to reach the ultimately real than science."¹⁸ To make more clear that he has recognised, and

15. "Is Religion Possible?": Chapter VII of *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

16. *ibid.*, p. 175 : cf. p. 174.

17. *ibid.*, p. 174.

18. *ibid.*, p. 185.

has not appreciated, the pragmatism of modern science he proceeds: "In the domain of science, we try to understand its [i.e. experience's] meaning in reference to the external *behaviour* of reality; in the domain of religion we take it as representative of some kind of reality and try to discover its meanings in reference mainly to the inner *nature* of that reality."¹⁹

But to understand reality is not the ultimate aim of science. Science is aiming not at "reaching the most real" and at interpreting experience, but at changing experience. Its object is action. Its object is the control of nature. And Iqbal, of all people, should appreciate this: just as, in his saner moments, he appreciates the same of religion. Earlier in the present discourse, as in his more valuable poetry, he avers that the purpose of religion is, not omphaloskepsis, but to save man from "the present slender unity of the ego, his liability to dissolution" and to develop "his amenability to reformation and his capacity for an ampler freedom to create".²⁰ From the point of view of the development of the ego, it is science, applied science, that is important, with the vast possibilities that it has opened up in the world of to-day, and much more, of to-morrow. To save his personality from meagreness and to develop it with ampler freedom to create, man needs the activity offered by science, and the freedom offered by social science, rather than the contemplation of the metaphysician. The scientific activity must be guided by some dynamic morality, such as that which Iqbal construed religion to be in his more progressive ventures. But that is to ascribe to religion a far different aim from his present one of traffic with mystic ultimates.

The sociological aspect of the same problem he treats with the same confusion of thought and with greater disaster. Of the modern man he says: "In the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself; and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others. He finds himself unable to control his ruthless egoism and his infinite gold-hunger which is gradually killing all higher striving in him

19. *ibid.*; italics original.

20. *ibid.*, p. 181.

and bringing him nothing but life-weariness.”²¹ This is sound enough observation of mankind in a capitalist society in the last stages of collapse. What, then, should be done about it? He does not suggest constructing an alternative society to capitalism; socialism he rejects for the curious reason that it has repudiated the mysticism of Hegel, “the very source which could have given it strength and purpose.”²² Rather, let the individual imitate the proverbial ostrich: let him, “by rising to a fresh vision . . . triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict”.²³ In other words, rather than changing a rotten society, replacing it by one that is co-operative and has a unity that is real, Iqbāl is now advising man to leave society as it is, and through religion to overcome in spirit the unpleasant material facts. He is reinstating religion in its time-honoured role of an idealistic escape mechanism.

There remains yet one damning aspect of Iqbāl. Even at his most poetic, his most progressive, his most inclusively utopian, he never wished that the new values should apply to more than half the human race. He never understood, and he constantly fought against, those who deem that women too might share in the brave new world. He imagined European women heartless, hating maternity, love, and life; he wanted to keep women “pure” and in subjection. For women he wanted no activism, no freedom, no vicegerency of God. The glory of struggle and of self-contained individuality is apparently for man alone. Woman should remain as she has always been in Islam, confined, acquiescent to man, and achieving nothing in herself but only through others. She should remain a means to an end. Iqbāl kept his own wives in seclusion (*pardah*), and untiringly he preached to the world his conception of the ideal woman :

The chaste Fāṭimah²⁴ is the harvest of the field of submission,
The chaste Fāṭimah is a perfect model for mothers.

21. *ibid.*, p. 177.

22. *ibid.*, p. 178.

23. *ibid.*

24. Fāṭimah : the Prophet Muḥammad's daughter.

So touched was her heart for the poor,
 That she sold her own wrap . . .
 She who might command the spirits of heaven and hell
 Merged her own will in the will of her husband.
 Her upbringing was in courtesy and forbearance;
 And, murmuring the Qur'ān, she ground corn.²⁵

And yet Iqbāl towards the end must have recognised that he was wrong about women. There is a hint of this in his small poem "Woman" (*Awrat*): for the first time, he is raising the question, though he knows that he himself has no answer. The poem concludes:

I too at the oppression of women am most sorrowful;
 But the problem is intricate, no solution do I find possible.²⁶

*Iqbāl's Reactionary Followers
 and Other Modern Muslim Reactionaries*

After the World Economic Depression of the early 1930's, the move to establish a new and better social order in antithesis to capitalism grew to formidable proportions, in India as elsewhere. For instance, the nationalist movement in India turned from a political progressiveness to one also social. Again in India as elsewhere, this growing progressive movement was soon countered by the rallying of all forces intent on preserving the essentials of the present order, round an intensive and unlimited programme of reaction. On the continent of Europe the struggle led to the temporary victory of the reactionary forces, in fascism; but it was there complicated, and for a moment was almost overshadowed, by the older inter-imperialist struggle, with which it became almost inextricably involved. In India the social issue is still undecided, and here it has been complicated by and inextricably involved with the older nationalist-imperialist struggle. The trend within Indian nationalism, towards a somewhat socialist programme, may be said to have culminated about the time of the 1937 provincial elections. After that time the reactionaries, very much alive to the dangers of the progres-

25. from "Rumûz i Bekhudî in *Asrâr o Rumûz*, p. 178.

26. from "Awrat" in *Ḍarb i Kalīm*, p. 96.

sive developments, organised themselves and moved with terrific force to smash or frustrate the socialist tendency—within and without the Congress. The issue having become clearer, they were able to call to their support a very large and very effective group of those who, previously apathetic or even liberal, now saw their privileges, their property, or their prejudices, threatened; and were bestirring themselves to protect them.

A few stragglers remained content with things as they were, and, unaware of crisis, continued to be apathetic or liberal as the case might be. But the large majority saw, or felt, however vaguely, that things as they were would not—and did not deserve to—continue. They realised that they must undertake to construct the sort of society that they desired, or they would be overwhelmed in a very different sort.

Various have been the efforts that the reactionaries and their numerous sympathisers have been making in India, to ensure the defeat of the progressives and if possible to ensure the realisation of their own ideals. Of these efforts we are concerned, of course, only with those which have to do with the Muslim religion; yet these have been among the most important. There was a precarious alliance set up by a few Muslims between their progress and their religion, which we have sketched above. In spite of it, on the whole it might be stated that during say the first year or two of the Second World War, the reactionaries managed to make an almost complete capture of middle-class Islam. They set about to use this victory with skill and to immense advantage. Presently, however, it began to seem that the leadership in this new movement could not rest with the overt reactionaries (by class, mostly landlord); but might pass to the middle classes themselves, whose policy was one of hesitancy between obstructionism and anti-imperialist advance. For a time the new movement simply attacked and disrupted Indian nationalism. More recently it has turned to the emergence of a second, Muslim, nationalism within the other. These shifts and tactics have been subtle; and are to be studied primarily in their political aspects. We shall return to them later, therefore; under the political head.

At this stage in our study, our business is to examine how the social reactionaries laid hold on the process of development of the ideas of bourgeois Islam, and diverted that process to their own use. We have already observed how the religious ideas of the liberals were being transformed by the evolving social background into becoming objectively conservative. From that it has been but a step to render them reactionary. To that step we shall return in a moment. Meanwhile we notice how thin can be the distinction between many of the *ideas* of progressives and reactionaries, by observing the use which the latter, with a slight contortion, can make of the ideological achievements of the religiously advanced. Any reactionary movement has to decorate itself with progressive ideas, or it would attract no considerable following; especially among the central and lower middle classes. Already we have seen how Iqbāl himself was ready to intersperse his progressive thought with conservatism. Now we shall turn to intellectuals who are completely reactionary and yet can interpret their ideas as being correct presentations of Iqbāl.

To explain, to expand, to write commentaries on, and to "follow" Iqbāl, became almost a major profession in Indian Islam. There was a wide market for expositions of Islam *a la* Iqbāl particularly for expositions that the conservative bourgeoisie could read with comfort and applause. Of the numerous books, pamphlets, and even societies devoted to the memory of Iqbāl and to the new "Islamic" social order, none is particularly important in itself, though all are significant. For instance, a not very influential group of intellectuals in Delhi constituted an association called *Tūlu' al-Islām* ("The Rise of Islam"), after Iqbāl's poem of the same name. They have issued a monthly journal with this title. They have claimed to present Islam in its pristine and overwhelmingly admirable purity. They have had no definite programme, but their main point has been that Islam, as Iqbāl presented it, is so excellent that one should work for an "Islamic" society, or at the least should not stoop so low as to work for any other objective, such as that of the Indian National Congress, or of the socialist movement. Some of their literature has been explicitly devoted to showing how

un-Islamic and bad socialism is. Many of the members are government servants.

A recent book on Iqbāl, by a young Lahore lawyer with a Master's degree, is fairly typical. He calls it *The Poet of the East*,²⁷ and its three sections deal with the life, the poetic writings, and the teaching of Iqbāl. The work contains a good deal of useful material, particularly its biographical information and its lavish quotations. But the author is not an exact thinker, and Part III is decidedly the least good, where he is handling ideas, attempting to appreciate Iqbāl as a thinker. In treating the poems, he is more at home in dealing with their aesthetic qualities than with their significance; and the entire work is too incoherent to give a clear picture of Iqbāl. By studying the details, however, one can find wherein the author deemed his master to be significant. One learns from this approach that the disciple tended to select two types of quotations: those illustrating the pure music of Iqbāl's verse, and those illustrating his social conservatism. He was attracted to Iqbāl the poet (as the title suggests), and to Iqbal the defender of the faith. Even the vigorous activism, which he does not particularly stress, is seen as a potential weapon for preserving the old society against the onslaughts of to-day, rather than as a challenge to creation. Islam is in danger; in danger of being overwhelmed by the West—and the West has been found wanting. The ideal is a resurrection of the glorious past of Muslim society: "Hejaz²⁸ was the poet's spiritual home and he wanted Islamic culture to be revived as it once had found full expression in 'the cradle of Islam.'"²⁹ Modern democracy is false, and moribund Socialism is no doubt good in some ways, but it is not good enough. Dictatorship is hopeful: "I feel that a man will appear in the near future. He will be a man of action. He shall hold in his hands the salvation of Muslim India. A personality is needed to-day to guide the Muslims. Mustafa Kemal has brought salvation to Turkey. Mussolini has changed the destiny of Italy. In Germany

27. Abdullah Anwar Beg, *The Poet of the East. The life and work of . . . Iqbal*, 1939.

28. In Arabia.

29. op. cit., p. 348.

Hitler has founded a new era and the person to whom I refer, it seems to me, shall spring from the soil of the Punjab.'"³⁰ The author's admiration is fed on presenting his hero as championing communalism in India, reaction in Afghanistan, and as the friend of prince and imperialist. On the position of women, the disciple wants no modernism.

That there is not wanting that effusive and meaningless mysticism proper to the fascist, is shown by the opening paragraphs of another book by this same writer: "Since the appearance of man on the globe, all theoretical principles and practical forms of government owed their origin to the specific position of circumstantial facts. The mystic hand of time has been one of the most active factors in the Universal process. 'Nothing' could have no connection with anything, unless nothing meant anything. Every point on the globe has a particular *locus standi* . . . All these theories, principles and laws are the inductive inferences of the ostensibly unintelligible Universe, which behaves so, irrespective of the existence of those laws."³¹ The work from which the above is taken is called *Since Our Fall*, and is designed to rouse Muslims to rehabilitate themselves as rulers of an empire, assuring them that only the strict observance of the traditional code of the Canon Law will save them.

Another admirer of Iqbāl, also a Lahore Master of Arts, presents a social vision in which the fascist ideology is even clearer. This writer was distressed, he says, by his fellow students' hostility to religion (an interesting allusion). He, therefore, produced this book³² to put Iqbāl's social message (from the poem *Rumūz i Bekhudī*) into prose so that it could no longer be neglected. He begins with the individual personality, which, following his master, he glorifies, stressing again and again the world and life-affirming attitudes. The ideal is the strong, self-reliant, almost aggressive self. He virulently criticises modern Western society, with its evil capitalism, its democracy and nationalism, and its supremacy of reason; and then he passes on to a presentation of the ideal society, which is the "Islamic".

30. *ibid.*, p. 130; quoting Iqbāl, without reference.

31. Anwar Beg, *Since Our Fall*, p. 2. 32. Bashir Ahmad Dar, *op. cit.*

There is a qualified admiration for certain aspects of socialism; but human brotherhood and equality, and every other ideal, will truly be found only in a purged, vigorous Islamic Nation. This society must be rid of Persian renunciation and modern irreligion, must go back to be based squarely on the Qur'ān, Muḥammad, and Arab manliness. It must be centred around the shrine of Makkah (Mecca), and have as its unifying ideal the preaching of God. In this society woman will be rescued from Western immorality, and will be given the true equality which only Islam has brought her, as a wife and mother in seclusion.

The argument is cast in vigorous and modern language; it borrows the energy, as well as the prestige, of Iqbāl. It is meant to sound progressive, and to catch the enthusiasm of modernised youth. But in fact, where it is not sheer conservatism and tradition, it is fascist. The author reacts, with what in the final chapter, on woman, has become furious hatred, against Western influence, against modern trends among his fellows, and against the suggestion that mankind might now move forward to newer, better worlds. He is particularly impressed with the finality of Islam. Nothing new can supersede it; he continually emphasises society's need to follow past tradition and heritage, and warns against the disorganising effect of *ijtihād* (reinterpretation of the Law) on a society which is in danger. There is, in fact, in the society which he proffers, nothing new; except elements of the ideology of National Socialist Germany. These, apparently, are the only modern Western ideas that he has been able to assimilate. There is the stress on vitality and aggressive power; the distrust of democracy, of the common man, and of reason; the promise of salvation from the immorality and the decadence of the floundering West. Naturally, there is the confining of woman to her proper place, in the home.

And we may well notice one final point of his scheme which again is good fascist thinking. Iqbāl has often been upheld as an ardent individualist, and his followers regularly emphasise this point. It is true that Iqbāl was intensely interested in individuals, and stressed the thesis that they are the ultimate values. Actually, the point is obvious enough; and any sociologist,

ethicist, or theologian who is not ultimately concerned with individuals is a menace. Yet, although individuals are ultimate, society is primary. The individual is born into society and can live only through and because of it. The determinative influence of society on personality and on everything else about a person, is a fundamental fact whose importance has only recently been understood. To ignore it is grossly to err. Any sociologist, ethicist, or theologian who is not primarily concerned with society is a menace. The socialist wants a certain type of society, because of the good effects that it will have for the individual members. The fascist finally loses the individual in the service of the mystical, impersonal "state". For instance, the author of the work that we have been considering, who ostentatiously began with the individual rather than society, ends with society rather than the individual ; a society which is "ideal," and relative to which the life of a single man is of no significance. "Though individuals come into the world and then disappear from its face, a society goes on living. The death of an individual does not affect it. It is not the man in his personal capacity who is important—it is rather the office which he fills that carries a weight for society."³³ Thus eventually, a reactionary movement has to admit its lack of concern for persons. Islam quickly lent itself to this anti-personal system, by making use of its traditional doctrine that all individuals must be subordinated in value to a transcendental God. Now, more mundane, it readily subordinates them, as do German and other fascist ideologies, to a transcendentalised community.

Interpretations of Islam, particularly of Iqbal's Islam, along such lines as these appeared in considerable abundance during the later years of the 'thirties and on into the Second World War. This kind of thinking was, naturally, absorbed more and more into the politics of the Muslim League ; rather than multiplying instances of it here, therefore, and following out its development, we will consider it more thoroughly in that connection. In general we may say that the trend in this new intellectuals' con-

ception of Islam has been towards a this-worldly religion demanding a virile, somewhat irrational, and somewhat martyr-like devotion to replace the present, obviously evil, social order with a new one which shall embody the details and/or cherish the ideals of the old (pre-industrial) order. One important part of the programme has been to resist with all the vigour, and the bigotry, of revitalised religion, every attempt to construct a society embodying values or principles not explicitly thought of by Muḥammad in seventh-century Arabia or by his legists in the civilisation of the subsequent few centuries. Another important part has been to resist, with the same vigour and the same bigotry, all fellow Indians who are not nominally Muslim.

The religious enthusiasm of this political and social movement has not been accompanied by much critical interest in religion as such. In Indian Islam, as elsewhere in the world, despite the "Islamic" ardour of the Indian Muslim middle-class community, there has been an increasingly widespread indifference to legal interpretations and to theology. Whereas there used to be zealous religious debates on the street corners, hardly more than a decade or two ago, and the educated used to pore over and to puzzle over book after book on modernism, to-day the youth is unacquainted and unconcerned with any of the intellectual problems which religion, as a valid way of life, is facing. In the universities, even when they teem with Muslim "religious" fervour, the number of students reading theology, Arabic, etc., has recently been hardly greater than the number of scholarships in these subjects. We have seen how the liberals finally answered more or less the criticisms of Islam which the Christians advanced. To-day the modernised Muslim is satisfied with those answers ; and no one arises to answer, and hardly even to notice, the criticisms of Islam and of all religion advanced in modern times by the rationalist, the historian, the psychologist, and the sociologist. Just as the nineteenth-century orthodox Islam that refused to meet the charges of the Christians and the Western liberals, and attacked Sir Sayyid Aḥmad and Amīr 'Alī when they did so, was a bulwark of social conservatism then ; so to-day that Islam which refuses to meet these modern charges can

serve only socially reactionary groups. It has been serving them remarkably well.

We turn now to the liberals. We left them becoming more and more conservative, as they finally found social processes moving far ahead of them while they refused to keep pace. This conservatism, however, was not dynamic enough to prove decisively effective. What they lacked was activism; and with this Iqbāl has supplied them. With this addition, they have been ready to take their place in the developing reactionary movement. Their place has not been that of leaders, perhaps, but as the social crisis became more acute, they have been pleased to follow where the reactionaries lead. Their eulogy of traditional Islam, the pride that they have had, and incited, in its ancient culture, have served well to provide that backward-looking romanticism on which reactionary movements are based. In Germany, the fascist movement had to construct most of the corresponding Germanic and "Aryan" enthusiasm after it came to power, and had to make it fight against and overcome the people's traditional religion and their traditional liberalism. Indian Islam found its task much easier, for the devotion to a national myth was already to hand, and was encouraged by both liberalism and religion.

"Liberal" pamphlets on Islam in the recent past were apt to begin with the usual liberal presentation of Islam as the perfect culture, source of all that is splendid and just, and unique in its past glorious achievements. Then they have gone on to view the contemporary breakdown of industrial capitalism in Europe. This is not only by way of contrast. The new touch was to infer that Western culture would soon collapse, and to ask what would take its place. Islam can give a good, stable society. But if it fails to seize the present opportunity, other forces, satanic, will take over. To prevent this, Muslims must unite in a strong, disciplined body and be prepared to act.³⁴ In other words, socialism is coming, and must be resisted.

34. This paragraph is an outline of a representative pamphlet of this type: Abdul Wabed, *The Spirit of Islamic Culture*.

As the religious liberals have become socially conservative, there has been a tendency back towards religious conservatism also. The Muslim bourgeoisie had apparently accepted as final the liberalising of Islam wrought by the early reformers. But recently they became afraid ; and they began to feel that even that much concession to progress might be dangerous. The men who used to speak of the "spirit" of Islam and its liberal values, deprecating formalism and outworn orthodox traditions, have recently been supporting leaders who beckon to return to every detail of the old Islamic practice. They have been reading books that offer strict orthopraxy as the only salvation. Typically popular have been the writings of Muḥammad Asad, a European who was converted to Islam and settled in India. He was distressed, he says, at the inhumanity, haste, and mechanism of modern Europe, and turned to the calmer, simpler, and more religious life of "Islam". In other words, he has escaped from the horrors of capitalist society, by going back to a pre-industrialist community. He was attracted not because that community had solved the problems of industrialism, but because it had not yet faced them.

From this, the position that he advocates for Islam follows at once. It must remain attached to the old society, must preserve it intact. Naturally he was aggrieved when he found the Muslims' society also turning capitalist and bourgeois ; and he opposed the liberals. Considering Islam's past, he wrote : "The revival of such a culture can never be brought about by an insistence on the greatness of its past and a tiresome repetition of facts in which that greatness was once manifested."³⁵ That is, liberalism is not good enough. What is needed, he says, is a new law, based squarely on the Qur'ān and the traditional code.

This legalism is also the thesis which he develops at length in one of his books³⁶: Muslims must observe in every detail the customs of Muḥammad and the law of his revelation. Islamic society, he maintains, is weak, collapsed. To pretend "that our

35. Asad-Weiss, "Towards a Resurrection of Thought," *Islamic Culture*, vol. XI, no. 1 (January 1937), p. 15.

36. Asad, *Islam on the Crossroads*.

humiliation is not bottomless"³⁷ is merely to delude oneself. "It *is* bottomless,"³⁸ and Muslims must face that fact. However, they must avoid inferring from it that Islamic culture has lived its day and is coming to an end, as other cultures have done and must do. For Islamic culture is unique, and final ; it is God-given, not mundane. Hence also it is perfect. Besides, there is naturalist proof : no other culture equals Islam in ethics, brotherhood, frictionless social organisation ; or in human dignity, security, happiness. The trouble then is not with Islam, but with ourselves ; we must not try to "reform" Islam but must simply bestir ourselves to put orthodox Islam into practice. "Islam . . . cannot benefit by the assimilation of the Western civilization"³⁹ (this coming from a European was particularly pleasing to Muslims). To follow the orthodox custom is to follow Islam.

Now there is nothing surprising in a disillusioned Westerner's thus clinging to the traditionalism of his adopted culture. The significant thing is that his book, in English, is already in its fifth Indian edition.

Finally we come to the most ominous representative of this trend back to religious conservatism: Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdūdī. We have already noticed his endeavouring skilfully to win back into the fold those modern Muslims who might be attracted away to the naturalism of science.⁴⁰ He is a cleric, without a modern education ; none the less he has been able to win the attention and to hold the esteem of an astonishingly large section of the Muslim student body. The religiously-minded Muslims in the universities of India in the early 'forties considered him to be the outstanding modern interpreter of Islam, the successor of Iqbāl, the synthetist of Islam and socialism. A careful study of his position, therefore, will throw much light on the tendencies of such students.

His sociological views are conveniently set forth in an address which he delivered in the Shāh Chirāgh Mosque, Lahore, in 1939. The address was subsequently printed in Urdu and in

37. op. cit., p. 126.

39. *ibid.*, p. 121.

38. *ibid.*, p. 126 ; italics original.

40. See above, pp. 75 f.

an English translation,⁴¹ and has been widely distributed. His thesis is : none of this modern European or American democracy, this Bolshevik regimentation, this Fascist apotheosis, this Turkish revolt from Islam ; the only state for Muslims, for that matter for all the world, is the "Islamic theocracy". This theocracy has its constitution and laws conferred by God, the traditional canon of Islam, "permanent, rigid and unamendable."⁴² No innovation is thinkable, no deviation tolerable. Women must remain secluded (behind *pardah*), which keeps them from becoming "hell on this earth" and "storm centres of that satanic liberty which woman is seeking and which is threatening to demolish the entire structure of human civilization."⁴³

Constitutionally, the Islamic state is ideal, with its supreme head, its Advisory Council, and its judiciary administering, without daring to alter, the law of God. No one is eligible to any office if he seeks that office: Islam wants sincerity. Parties are "not permitted" to form themselves in the Advisory Council: decisions are to be made with judgement, not on group lines. Generally the council shall decide by majority vote; but when one man is "right" and all the rest are wrong, then that one man's opinion shall be accepted.

And so on. This divine wants to erect intact the ideal social system of an old Islam. That he has no conception of the nature of modern problems merely makes him the more bitter.

His religious views may be judged from the book⁴⁴ to which we have already referred, containing the chapter on naturalism. It was published in 1940. It has in mind the doubting Muslim student, who is puzzled over orthodox Islam, or feels that he can throw it aside and venture forth for himself. The object is to kill such enterprise, and to call such students back to the traditional faith and practice.

"The fact that an instruction has emanated from the Prophet is a sufficient guarantee for its truth, and there can be no room for doubting it. Your inability to understand it is no

41. Maudoodi, *The Islamic Conception of State*.

42. *op. cit.*, p. 20.

43. *ibid.*

44. Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam*.

reason for its having flaw or defect; on the other hand, it means that there must be some defect in your own understanding. It is evident that one who does not know some art thoroughly cannot understand its subtleties, but such a person would be a fool to reject what an expert says, merely on the plea that he himself does not understand the expert.⁴⁵

We have already outlined the beautiful opening chapter, on Islam as the religion of nature.⁴⁶ After such a promising beginning, the argument at once degenerates into a scholastic defence of Muslim fundamentalism. The entire remainder of the book is devoted to compelling the reader to resume orthodoxy. The right living, which was the subject of discussion in chapter one, cannot exist, he solemnly declares, without the right set of beliefs; these can be had only from the inspired revelation sent down to Muhammad; his prophethood, in the fundamentalist sense, must therefore be accepted; consequently, all the precepts enunciated by him must be followed; the conclusion is that the complete body of Islamic thought and practice must be adopted without change.

He who began by stating the universal religion of nature ends by denying that there is any virtue in righteousness apart from correct Muslim belief⁴⁷; nor in belief apart from authoritarian acceptance of the Prophet⁴⁸; nor in acceptance of Muhammad apart from obeying his law⁴⁹; nor even in good intentions and the spirit of the law, apart from the letter.⁵⁰

Besides all this, this preacher's ethics is of the old ascetic-negative type. Righteousness for him means avoiding evil; avoiding, that is, those things that have been forbidden. Apart

45. *op. cit.*, p. 42.

46. See above, pp. 75 f.

47. Concerning non-Muslims whose actions "appear to conform with God's Law": "They are, however, actually rebels. Their apparent good deeds are not so through intentional submission and obedience to God, and have, therefore, no real value," Maududi, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

48. "One who turns away from the Prophet of God is surely a Kafir, be he a believer in God or a disbeliever" (*ibid.*, p. 47).

49. "One is a complete Muslim only when he fully carries out in practice the instructions given by Muhammad" (*ibid.*, p. 125).

50. "*Tasawwuf* . . . is nothing apart from *fiqh*" (*ibid.*, p. 155).

from obeying the law, this book mentions no positive good. The motive for righteousness is usually fear; occasionally, the hope of reward. Without the scheme of retribution (in another world), there would be for him no morality: "How can a man, who does not believe that God sees, hears and knows everything, keep himself away from disobeying God?"⁵¹ Compare also: "... because he knows that God's police never leaves him alone."⁵² Similarly, he tries to frighten his readers into observing the five daily prayers: if, he says, you do not perform them, either you do not believe it is obligatory, which is to belie the Qur'an and the messenger of God, or else you believe it is obligatory but shirk it, in which case you are altogether unreliable and cannot be trusted in any worldly transaction.⁵³

Naturally, holding such views in religion, he lacks any socially progressive concepts. He thinks of society as static, and constantly refers to the existing organisation of king and subject as typifying the relation of God to man. Once, relating the analogy more unmistakably to India, he alludes to the obedience divinely due even to the king's governor.⁵⁴

The science to which he frequently appeals, and with which he likes to feel that he is aligning Islam, is hardly more recent than the eighteenth century. There is no notion of evolution ("Nature remains the same in all periods and under all circumstances"⁵⁵); and laws are thought to *control* nature. Besides, he is a fatalist.

In short, this writer's ideal man is one who does not try to change the general scheme of things, which is from God, but sets out within it to do the best that he can for himself, acquiring riches and position and self-satisfaction, always remembering not to run afoul of the law and the government, and also, through fear of punishment, not to let his activities carry him into regions that God, thirteen centuries ago in Arabia, proscribed; meanwhile observing minutely, without change, without question,—if need be, without understanding—a traditionn

51. *ibid.*, pp. 23-4.

53. *ibid.*, pp. 133 f.

55. *ibid.*, p. 183.

52. *ibid.* p. 97.

54. *ibid.*, p. 46.

code. In return for the sacrifice that he has made in thus circumscribing his life, God will reward him plentifully in another world.

His ideal woman has her segregated place in the home.

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdūdī, then, has been approaching the student of to-day with the offer of, or rather the insistence upon, an ancient system; presented in slightly modernised terms, but without love, without creativity, and without any contribution to solving the problems which a student ought to be facing. Clearly he is a normal member of the old school of ignorant, intolerant, repressive religionists. Yet to him the religiously inclined among the present generation of educated youth have been confessing allegiance.

Mawdūdī represents the extreme wing of the tactics which the retrograde movement, often much more subtly, has been using: namely, to present Islam and the new possibilities opened up by modernity as alternatives. Renouncing the liberals, attempts to work out what is the Islamic way of life, given the new conditions and opportunities, the movement has been reverting to the conception that it is the Islamic way of life that is given, and is to be preserved, or resurrected, in the old terms, not re-expressed in the new. Intelligent Indian Islam passed its social crisis, and that section of it that has since been religious in the old and recognisable sense, quickly became a reactionary force of very formidable proportions.

A Note on Recent Developments at the Muslim University, Aligarh

Until very recently, the university at Aligarh was thoroughly liberal and predominantly secular. But about 1937 it came under the dominance of the Muslim League, and was infused with an almost hysterical religious enthusiasm, intolerant and anti-rational.

This reactionary situation followed closely a brief burst of Indian nationalism among the students. We noticed above that to a large extent the institution had been (except in 1920) politically apathetic, in the Sir Sayyid Ahmad pro-British tradition. But by 1936 the India-wide movement of discontent and of

progressive social striving had spread also to Aligarh students. In that year the undergraduates staged a considerable strike against the university's repression of nationalist activities. And when a resolution was moved in the Students' Union to found an All-India Muslim Students' Federation in reply to the new All-India Students' Federation, the "proposal was turned down in an overwhelming majority unprecedented in the history of the Union."⁵⁶

Such progressive moves were shortlived. The All-India Muslim Students' Federation, founded forcibly against the opposition of Muslim students⁵⁷ to-day flourishes. Aligarh became the emotional centre of "Pakistan". Most of the students, and all the vocal members of the staff, became wholehearted, even furious, supporters of Islamic fascism. The Khāṣār movement in 1941 transferred its headquarters to Aligarh.

In the autumn of 1939 there was an agitation to remove from the staff (allegedly on the grounds of atheism, communism, and the like) all those who did not sympathise with the Muslim League. Actually the men were not dismissed from their teaching posts, except one or two active and outspoken; the rest were warned, and hence they have to keep quiet for fear of losing their positions. Wardens of hostels who would not join the reactionary movement were removed from that direct contact with the students, and Muslim Leaguers were put in their place. In addition, the students were enticed into line by a sudden and prolific organisation of discussion groups led by Leaguers, of pro-League libraries, of the *Islāmiyat* club, etc. Further, from the university library "dangerous" books were removed: the writings of James Harvey Robinson on rationalism, of Freud on religion, and the like.

The result of these and similar measures was a pure fanaticism. Intellectual liberalism became almost as suppressed as in a modern German university; and, as there, professors were somehow found to proclaim the new irrationalism. The atmosphere

56. Prabodh Chandra, *Student Movement in India*, p. 79.

57. See the account of the founding and the first session in the *Indian Annual Register*, 1937, Calcutta, vol. I, pp. 415 f., and vol. II, pp. 465-8.

became one of aggressive mystic frenzy. The young students began to pour their idealistic zeal into the emotionalism of "Pakistan," and to dismiss rational argument with the contentment of religious authoritarianism, and its scorn. Meanwhile the seclusion of women (*pardah*) was being reintroduced. Aligarh once led the movement for the emancipation of women; in 1940 the few out-of-*pardah* girls who attended a students' meeting for Mr. Jinnāh, were hissed.

Chapter Five

THE CONTEMPORARY SYNTHESIS

We shall find in our political discussion below that in the 1940's for the Muslims communalism has been transforming itself into a new nationalism. Almost all Islamic thinking in India in this period has been involved in this issue; Muslims have followed the advice of their States Muslim League president: "Make politics your '*ibādat*'" (religious service, worship).¹ The one political problem adopted by Muslim thinkers has been to achieve freedom for their Indian Muslim nation; the one religious question to which they have given attention is how to serve that nation. The answer to the second question was for a time simply to work for its political freedom. Latterly men have been thinking also how best Islam could use that freedom: what sort of separate state, once one were achieved, would be most truly Islamic (that is, best). Until now, this trend of thought has been but slightly developed: few intellectuals have dealt with it, none has done so rigorously. But it has been growing.

The rise of separate Muslim nationalism within India has postponed the religious crisis that we outlined above (—only the future will tell whether it has averted it altogether); it is no longer necessary to choose between progress and communalism. Orthodox and liberal, conservative and progressive have reunited, to demand a separate Muslim state. The task of the Muslim progressive has been to make that demand as progressive as possible: and will be to make that Muslim state—internally and

1. Muḥammad Bahādur Khān (formerly Nawwāb Bahādur Yūsuf Jang), in his presidential address to the All-India States Muslim League, Karachi, 26 December 1943: "Mussalmānān will never succeed in their object until and unless they will not make [sc. 'they make'; the text is a mistranslation of the Urdu idiom] their politics their '*ibadat*' [or prayers]"; "You should avoid turning politics into a mere game, instead make it your '*ibadat*' or prayers"—Abdul Hamid (ed.), *Thirty-First Session of the All-India Muslim League*, pp. 141 and 143.

in its relations with the neighbouring Hindu state and the rest of the world—progressive and good. Almost no other Islamic task, certainly no conflicting one, has been claiming the attention of Indian Muslim intellectuals.

In other words, the idea that true Islam is the service of humanity, that the Muslim task is simply the creation of righteousness in the world, has died. In its place the supposition has become prevalent that true Islam is the service of Muslims (or of the Indian Muslims), that the Muslim duty is the creation of righteousness in Pakistan. Consequently, thinkers such as Sayyidayn, who made the divisive crisis imminent, have had almost no following. To the modern Muslim, indeed, "Islam" stands, on the one hand, for a given community (not necessarily, righteous), an extant group of people traditionally derived; and, on the other hand, for a complex of ideas, dynamic and reinterpreted in the most modern terms. But he feels no need to distinguish the two; rather his new synthesis, not yet explicit, is through Pakistan to transform that community by means of those ideas. The Indo-Muslim nation, in a free, self-directing state, will work to realise in practice the ideals which it, or he as its spokesman, has learned to value.

Part II

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

1. An Introductory Essay on Communalism.
2. The Pan-Islamic, Khilāfat and Related Movements
3. Islam and Indian Nationalism.
4. Islamic Nationalism ; the Khāksār Movement.
5. Islamic Nationalism ; the Muslim League.

Chapter One

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON COMMUNALISM

Communalism in India may be defined as that ideology which has emphasised as the social, political, and economic unit the group of adherents of each religion, and has emphasised the distinction, even the antagonism, between such groups ; the words "adherent" and "religion" being taken in the most nominal sense. Muslim communalists, for instance, have been highly conscious of the Muslims within India as a supposedly single, cohesive community, to which they devote their loyalty—paying little attention to whether the individuals included are religiously ardent, tepid, or cold ; orthodox, liberal, or atheist ; righteous or vicious ; or to whether they are landlord or peasant, prince or proletarian ; also paying little attention to Muslims outside of India.

We say "communalism has been" rather than "communalism is" because no definition of what communalism is could remain long valid. For the situation is highly dynamic ; the thing defined changes and develops. We shall see below that recently the phenomenon called "communalism" has developed into something for which "nationalism" now seems a better name. The above definition, however, is proffered as applicable at least for the period until about 1942, and will serve for at least the first part of our discussion, concerning the phenomena during that time.

The attitude is similar in many of its aspects to European nationalism and racialism, and has a parallel in the anti-Semitic "Aryanism" of Hitlerian Germany. Religiously, it is a reversion to tribalism : group solidarity is one of the sources of religion, and *vice versa*. Through the centuries, religion has developed to serve many other functions besides that elemental one of expressing the life of a closed fraternity ; and the great world religions

had thought to outgrow such restrictedness. But in to-day's embattled world, men readily press their religion again into the service not of its highest ideals but of the immediate interests of their own group.

In imposing its categories of thought, communalism has aimed at exterminating all other sociological and political categories. In raising and making supreme the communal issue, it confuses, if it does not suppress, every other issue, political, social, economic, linguistic—and even religious.

Communalism has as its causes many and intricate factors : economic, religious, psychological, and so on. The question as to which of these factors is the most important presumably means *which is the most accessible to change*. Given any other meaning, the question is both unanswerable and unimportant.

To have some of its inhabitants professing one religion, others another, is a situation which in an acute form India has known for a millennium. At present, the numerical distribution, according to the 1941 census,¹ is as follows :

Hindus	.	.	254,930,506	65.5%	of the total.
					Of these, 48,813,180
					are "Scheduled
					Castes" (outcast)—
					12.5% of the total.
Muslims	.	.	94,389,428	24.3	
Tribal	.	.	25,441,489	6.5	
Indian Christians			6,040,665	1.6	
Sikhs	.	.	5,691,447	1.5	
Others	.	.	2,504,420	.6	
Total	.		388,997,955	100.0	

Figures such as these are unreliable in detail, since communal-

1. *Census of India, 1941*, vol. I, part 1, pp. 98 f. The figure for "Muslims" here given has been corrected in accordance with the note, *ibid.*, p. 97. The grouping "Tribal" in the 1941 enumeration included all members of tribal "communities," irrespective of their religion ; the large majority of such persons are Animists, and of the remainder most are Christian by religion, a few are Muslim, etc. Anglo-Indians and "other" (i.e. foreign) Christians have been included by us under "Others," along with Jayns, Pārsis Buddhists, Jews, and the Census's "Others".

ists worked hard to falsify them—trying to swell the number for their own community. Apart from inaccuracies, however, such figures need careful consideration if they are not to be misleading. Under “Muslims,” for instance, they include anti-religious members of atheist societies, as well as certain villagers steeped in peculiar superstitions and practising a religion quite degraded and almost indistinguishable from neighbouring varieties of Hinduism. Also included are the execrated heretics of the *Ahmadiyah* movement ; and, of course, both of the two main groups into which Islam has historically been segmented, the *Sunnīs* and the *Shi‘īs*, who often enough (for purposes of riots and the like) are considered separate communities each with an enthusiastic communalism of its own.

Ten per cent, at most, of the Indian Muslims now living are sometimes said to be descended from foreigners ; even for them, this means only that one of their innumerable ancestors several centuries ago was a Turk or Arab or the like, perhaps—going back several more centuries—Muḥammad himself. If this one line of descent is traceable through the male parent in each case, they think it particularly important—following an ancient prejudice about heredity. Moreover, to the extent that Islam in India has succumbed to the caste prejudices of the Hindu system, upper-class Muslims have married only within their own group, thus keeping down the number of their children’s ancestors. However, in general it is obvious that the Muslims of India have “blood” that is, with microscopic exceptions, as much Indian as is that of anyone else. They have no ethnological reason for thinking of themselves as “foreigners” ; nor have they done so, with few exceptions.

On the other hand, they have been considered and treated as outsiders socially by the other religious group, the Hindus. Hinduism has never outgrown its tribalism ; has never aspired or claimed to be anything higher than the religion of a group, or rather a series of sub-groups eternalised in the caste system. To the Hindu, every Indian who is a Muslim is an outcast out-caste, an Untouchable with whom dealings must not be so intimate as to transgress certain formal rules. This exclusion is religious;

but with Hinduism, "religious" means "social" in a highly evolved traditional way.

These facts, therefore, have presented India with a communal situation throughout the centuries. It has been sometimes less, sometimes more, a problem ; has raised issues sometimes of acute, sometimes of devastating, import ; sometimes it has raised no issues at all. Traditionally, the two groups do not intermarry (the importance of this is not great in a society where bride and bridegroom do not choose their own marriage anyway) and do not interdine (Hindus of different castes are not allowed to interdine amongst themselves, either); they wear clothes differently, they give their children names and somewhat different habits. But at times, such differences have not been emphasised; the two groups have also had much in common, and have accepted their differences calmly, as they have accepted everything long established, including the friendship between them.

The religious situation is, therefore, not in itself a disaster ; though it has explosive potentialities. (And one may argue forcefully that the real welfare of India will wait until the country has been religiously purged). The relation between the Hindus and the Muslims is not a set problem with an intrinsic solution; rather it is a process, with a very long history. It is a developing process, which at various stages has raised severe problems, desperately demanding solutions (and often not getting them) At other stages it has raised no great problem at all. In other words, it has differed from century to century, from province to province, from town to town, from city to village. Also, it has differed from class to class, and from one politico-economic setting to another. Communalism in the modern history of India has grown and shifted, changed and developed ; and is still changing, will continue to develop. Communalism in 1945 is not communalism in 1940 ; the "solution" to "the communal problem" will not be the same to-morrow as it is to-day. Communalism has been now exaggerated, now hideous ; now something to be fought against, now something to be transformed.

Our immediate task is to try to understand it.

During the first several decades of British rule in India,

almost until the twentieth century, communalism was mild, overt friction rare. The religious groups were certainly conscious of differences between themselves, and on occasions those differences flared up into conflict. But such cases were isolated, in both space and time; in general the groups lived together in comparative harmony. In the days before British rule, communal antagonism between rulers and ruled, especially between conquerors and conquered, had been in many instances intense, even vitriolic. At times, the religious groups lived peaceably together. At other times, particularly when the religion of one of them represented the ruling class and its exploitation, they came into bitter, often violent and frenzied, collision. Under Muslim rule, there were certain Hindu-Muslim clashes; under Sikh rule, Muslim-Sikh hatred and fighting; and so on. Most of the sporadic class-struggles in Indian history have been fought under a religious (communalist) ideology.

But antagonism continuous, widespread, and between equals is something modern.

We bear in mind, then, the legacy of previous history: a long tradition which might lie dormant and forgotten, or of which parts might be stirred into vehemence under appropriate circumstances. But we begin our discussion with the early nineteenth century.

We note first the impetus to communal distinctions given to the lower classes by the "Wahhābi" movement. This was later a political and economic movement; but it began as religious reform. Sayyid Aḥmad of Rai Bareli began his career by preaching a return to "pure" Islam; he worked to purge the religion of its accretions and corruptions. This aspect of his work was taken up by various other reformers, and spread far; sects, more or less puritanical, developed throughout Bengal and North India—*Ahl i ḥadīth*, *Farā'idī*, and many others. These smouldered on for the rest of the century. The relevant point here is that the accretions which the reformers set themselves to removing from the Muslims' religion, were mostly borrowings from Hinduism, or superstitious degradations shared with Hinduism. When a religious reformer appeared in a village, he attacked with

unrestrained zeal those aspects of the Muslims' religious practice that they shared with the Hindus, and he emphasised with the ardour of intense conviction the "fundamentals" of Islam—i.e. the points at which it differed from other faiths. Lower-class Islam emerged from the reform "purer" but more communalist.

The political struggles of the "Wahhābis" served a similar purpose. In the revolt against the Sikhs in the Punjab, and in the various uprisings against the British in the North and in Bengal, they proclaimed a Holy War against the infidel, and appealed not only to the oppressed to unite against their exploiters, but to the Muslims to unite for the defence of their religion. None of these political activities, however, was anti-Hindu.

Economically, the communal division no longer held. "In the peasant rising around Calcutta in 1831, they broke into the houses of Musalman and Hindu landholders with perfect impartiality."² Upper-class Muslims opposed them, despite their religious appeals: "The presence of Wahabis in a district is a standing menace to all classes . . . possessed of property or vested rights. . . . Every Musalman priest with a dozen acres attached to his mosque or wayside shrine has been shrieking against the Wahabis during the past half century"³; "the well-to-do Muhammadans . . . had the whole vested interests of the Musalman clergy to back them, and by degrees drew out a learned array to defend their position. . . . During the past few years, a whole phalanx of *Fatwas* or Authoritative Decisions have appeared on this side."⁴ In addition to expressing an uprising of the peasantry against the landlords, the "Wahhābi" movement was also, especially in mid-century, a sort of Indian Luddite movement, a protest of the Indian craftsman against the introduction of machine goods. In any case, the affair was a class-struggle, and the communalistic confusion of the issue evaporated. The movement made use of a religious ideology, as class-struggles in pre-industrialist society have often done; but though religious, it was not simply communalist.

2. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, p. 107.

3. *ibid.*, p. 106.

4. *ibid.*, p. 112; italics original.

The "Wahhābī" movement, therefore, did not set lower-class Muslims against lower-class Hindus in open conflict, nor did it divert lower-class Muslims from economic issues to a false solidarity with their communal "friends" but class enemies. None the less it did encourage communal attitudes, especially in religious thinking, and left a considerable section of the Muslim masses more susceptible to later communalist propaganda than they might otherwise have been.

The Mutiny itself, like the political Holy Wars of the "Wahhābis," emphasised the Muslim community of India as a religious-political unit; but at the same time emphasised co-operation between that community and the Hindus in face of a common enemy.

Muslim communalist feeling in modern times cannot be discussed intelligently unless the class divisions of Indian society as well as its communal divisions are kept firmly in mind.

All competent observers agree that the Government of India singled out the Muslim community for deliberate repression for the first decade or so after Mutiny. What they mean is that the government repressed the Muslim upper classes, and the sections from which the middle classes would have been drawn. (The peasants were and always have been repressed; no new policy was devised for them, and their treatment was quite indistinguishable from that meted out to any other peasants, Hindu or whatever.) The British policy was based on the grounds that the Muslim upper classes had been primarily responsible for the Mutiny, attempting to rehabilitate their Mughal Empire. As early as 1843, a governor-general had given the warning to London and suggested the use of communalism to preserve imperialist rule: "I cannot close my eyes to the belief that that race (Mahomedans) is fundamentally hostile to us and our true policy is to reconcile the Hindus."⁵ The Mutiny was barely quelled before the governor of Bombay was saying, "*Divide et*

5. Lord Ellenborough, in a despatch to the Duke of Wellington, dated 18 June 1843, quoted in Parulekar, "The Future of Islam in India," *Asia*, vol. XXVIII, no. 11 (Nov. 1928), p. 874; and in many other nationalist works.

impera was the old Roman motto, and it should be ours.”⁶ The policy, though perhaps not the motto, was adopted; and as another British official later said, “During and for long after the Mutiny, the Mohammedans were under a cloud. To them were attributed all the horrors and calamities of that terrible time.”⁷ A fairly full and very convincing indictment of the government policy was presented by another British official, W.W. Hunter, when the policy had been carried so far as to be getting dangerous. In the last section of his book on *The Indian Musalmans*, he gave extensive facts and figures showing the discrimination against Muslims. “The Muhammadan population is . . . shut out alike from official employ and from the recognised Professions.”⁸ The author admitted also the spoliation and extermination of the old Muslim educational system, and gave examples of misappropriation. (These various writings appeared in the days before it became necessary to hide the true character of European imperialism behind a screen of liberal verbiage and high-sounding principles.)

The repression of the Muslims that is indicated above—keeping them out of the administration and of the medical, legal, and other such professions, and in general not educating them—was, clearly, a policy affecting the upper and the potentially middle classes. It was at this time that the clerical and professional classes among the Hindus were developing, and beginning to wield some power. The India Office was afraid to allow that same power to the Muslims, whose upper classes, as the Mutiny supposedly showed, already wielded more power than was comfortable for the foreigner. More especially, it was afraid to allow that power to both groups at the same time.

This political policy of the government would have been less successful than it was, had there not been powerful economic factors operating to reinforce it. Communalism would not have proved so effective a divisive force, nor could the upper-class Muslims have been so effectively repressed, had the Muslim and

6. Monstuart Elphinstone, minute of 14 May 1859, quoted in Dutt, *India To-day*, p. 389, and in many other nationalist works.

7. Graham, *Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan* (2nd ed.), p. 40.

8. Hunter, op. cit., p. 173.

Hindu sections of the classes concerned been at the same economic level. But they were not. Economic development within the British imperialist system benefited a group of Indians of whom a far larger proportion were Hindus than Muslims. The Indian bourgeoisie still to-day is predominantly composed of Hindus (and some others, e.g., Pārsīs); its Muslim members are relatively few, and, taken collectively, poor. This is sometimes stated in the form that the Muslim middle class is much weaker than its rival; or still less accurately, that the Muslim community is 'economically and culturally backward.

This last is quite misleading, because there is no evidence that the Muslim peasantry or proletariat is "backward" compared to any other lower class. None the less, it is commonly believed that the one "community" is poorer than the other. The fact behind this, that the share of Muslims in middle-class development is relatively weak, lies at the very heart of present-day communal discord, as well as having contributed much to the rise of communalism in the nineteenth century. It is, therefore, of supreme importance.

Basically, the situation can be traced back to the fact that the Muslim conquest of India was principally by land from the north, whereas the British conquest was from the sea-coasts of the east, south, and west. From this arises the result that in general—there are numerous incidental and even important exceptions—the areas most affected by the Muslims, the areas where they established themselves most successfully as the upper class, were the areas least or last affected by the British. The economic system introduced by the British first weakened all other major economic activities, and finally, except in the case of agriculture, has replaced them. Yet the centres of that British system, commercial and industrial, have been in places remote from Muslim centres: Calcutta, Madras, Bombay. (There were hosts of Muslims in Bengal, but they were of the lower classes chiefly.) As we saw in our study of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's influence, what upper-class Muslims there were in those centres participated in the economic and cultural activities of the new imperialism much as did anyone else. But throughout the

country the balance numerically was in favour of non-Muslims.⁹

Once communalism was started, then in addition to being encouraged by the government, it grew of itself. For instance, by the time that British imperialism and all its accoutrements reached such Muslim centres as Lucknow, Delhi, and Lahore—long years after it had already flourished in non-Muslim strongholds—there were established traditions, and commercial, family, and religious connections, as well as political policy, making for a repetition even in these places of a predominantly non-Muslim bourgeoisie.

Moreover, throughout the country the foreign invaders who were Muslims were and remained overwhelmingly feudal, landed. To the very end of the Mughal period they did not oust the already established, Hindu, classes engaged in trade and in the non-military professions, the minor clerks, etc. Nor did they win converts to Islam from among these classes; it was the destitute and outcast who flocked to the new religion. Yet it was to a large extent from these mercantile and professional classes that the new bourgeoisie was later drawn.

It has frequently been observed that the Muslims were the ruling class before the British came. It is equally true, and much more important, that the Muslims were of the lowest class. As we have said, Islam made most of its converts, millions upon millions of them, from among the oppressed and the poor. It raised their ideological level, but not their economic. Consequently the great bulk of Muslims to-day are peasants and proletariat; while some of their landlords, and all their mill-owners, are Hindus.

Whenever and wherever social changes are mooted, there will arise men of religion to protest against them. In nineteenth-century Indian Islam, when a new civilisation was penetrating the country, men arose who with passion told their fellows to

9. The major share of the maritime commerce throughout the Indian Ocean was in the hands of Muslim merchants in the fifteenth century, but passed to European hands (first Portuguese, much later English) long before the decay of the land power of the Muslim upper class within India. What was the ultimate fate of those Muslim middle classes is not clear; apparently, they were for the most part wiped out.

have nothing to do with that civilisation, lest they sin against God. They thereby added a religious to the economic and political reasons given above for the slowness of the emergence of a Muslim middle class. The theologues even forbade, on religious grounds, the learning of the English language. Any Muslim who did venture to align himself with the bureaucracy, or to enter the new professions, was attacked as a traitor to Islam, by his fellows and perhaps by his own conscience. Now this religious conservatism certainly supplied the conscious motive in many instances for Muslims' not turning bourgeois. It was particularly active in discouraging their use of what educational system the government did supply. Also, it continued to be influential as a deterrent after the other causes, economic and political, had ceased to operate.

But however large a place the religious aspect of the question may have taken in men's conscious minds, religious conservatism was not decisive as a cause of Muslim "backwardness". The decisive causes were the political and economic. This can readily be shown by a comparison with other cases. For religious conservatism is not confined to Indian Islam; as we have said, it is always present at a time of social change. But when the basic factors impel that change, religious conservatism is ineffective. The priests who cry out against progress are, in those cases, not heeded. Hinduism is as conservative a religion as ever Islam was; and there were Hindu fanatics whose voice was loud and strident in its opposition to Westernism. By citing their religious scruples, one might explain why Muslims were slow, but one cannot explain why they were slower than the Hindus, to take to British ways. Again, it is instructive to compare Egypt, a Muslim country where the orthodox were equally determined to prevent the transition to a new society; but there the economic and political factors were favourable to the development of a capitalist middle class, and a strong capitalist Muslim middle class did, in fact, develop. Further, the point is made unmistakable in a fact to which we shall return in a moment: that after a certain lapse of time the basic economic and political factors in Muslim India changed, and then—

although the religious discouragement continued, and no doubt impeded the movement somewhat—a Europeanised Muslim middle class did appear. It not only appeared, but produced (as we have been studying all along) religious interpretations of its own. Religion was exceedingly important in the social conservatism of the Muslim bourgeoisie ; but not as an efficient cause.

Before we go on to consider the new situation which was produced when the basic factors did change, and became conducive to the emergence of a bourgeois class in the Muslim sections of India, we shall note a further psychological factor often cited as a cause of the relative slowness of modernisation of (upper-class) Islam. The argument runs that because the Muslims used to be the ruling class of India, they therefore resented more than others the usurpation of their power by the British. They resented it so deeply, supposedly, that it was long before they could be reconciled to any intercourse whatever with the new order. Now it is true that they resented thus, and bitterly. We do not deny either the existence or the profundity of the resentment when we point out that the argument based upon it is fallacious.

For the first British conquests were made from Hindu ruling classes, such as the Marhattas. In the Punjab, where the Muslim question is at its height, the rulers were Sikhs. This does not prevent modern middle-class Muslims in the Punjab and Western India from thinking vaguely that they used to be the rulers ; and hence compensating their capitalist frustration with offended pride. Resentment, like religious conviction, loomed large for these Muslims ; but whether as a cause or as a result of their not finding admission to the imperialist organisation, is a question well worth pondering.

The Muslims, then, "suffered most at the hands of the British when the mutiny had been quelled."¹⁰ But presently a reversal of the government's policy, and a development in the economic process, produced a new and quite different situation ; and middle-class Islam reacted accordingly.

10. Andrews and Muckerji, *Rise and Growth of the Congress in India*, p. 49.

The India Office did not abandon its communal policy. It continued to play off the middle and upper classes of one community against those of the other, and in fact has steadily intensified such tactics ever since.¹¹ But about 1870 it began to change favourites. Instead of repressing the Muslims any further, continuing to exclude them from the growing professional classes, in fear of their power to revolt, now it began to encourage Muslims to enter those classes, offering them positions and privileges in return for loyalty, in fear of the nascent Hindu power to revolt. The previous policy had by then achieved its object; and was no longer useful. For the Mutiny, representing basically the last bid for supremacy on the part of the ruling classes of the old order, had been effectively crushed. The new order was firmly established, and the power of those classes was overcome as a serious threat. It would be expedient now, once they were too weakened for independent rebellion, but while they were still influential, to take them into alliance, rather than continuing to antagonise them. Especially as a new threat was presently discernible, developing very gradually and weakly at first: the nationalism of the growing Westernised and capitalist middle classes. The government's task was to find a counterpoise to this; and preserving its useful policy of communalism, it turned to the Muslim upper classes to provide that counterpoise. As Sir John Strachey expressed it, once the new policy was in full operation: "The existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India. The better classes [*sic*] of Mohammedans are a source to us of strength and not of weakness. They constitute a comparatively small but energetic minority of the population, whose political interests are identical with ours."¹²

Signs of calling a halt to the repression of upper-and middle-class Muslims appeared about fifteen years after the Mutiny. In 1871 the official W.W. Hunter published his important book on the Muslims, from which we have quoted. A large part of this work was devoted to the "Wahhābī" movement, among the lower

11. See particularly Krishna, *The Problem of Minorities*.

12. Strachey, *India, Its Administration and Progress* (3rd ed.), p. 308.

classes, and a good deal to the workings, among the middle and upper, of the government's anti-Muslim policies. The point that the author was making was that anti-British feeling among all sections of the community was dangerous in its extent; and he criticised the government's past policy as inexpedient. He ended by pleading for a more lenient attitude, and specifically for establishing and emphasising educational facilities for Muslims, in order to win over an influential section of them to loyalty.

It was just about this time, it will be remembered, that Sayyid Ahmad Khān's endeavours towards a reconciliation of the British government and the Muslim middle and upper classes were beginning to receive official encouragement. During his trip to England (1869-70) he was warmly received by lords and officials, and was decorated by the Crown. In 1873 the essay, which he had published in Urdu fifteen years earlier on the Mutiny, was resurrected, translated by two English officials,¹³ and republished in English. Two years later the College at Aligarh was opened with a flourish, under the beaming smiles of a patronising government. Before long, British favour for well-to-do Muslims was a recognised Indian institution.

Official circles were presently assuring the world that their old distrust and repression of Muslims were all a mistake. We have already noticed an English army officer admitting the anti-Muslim attitude that followed the Mutiny¹⁴; it being 1885 he went on to admit also, "This prejudice was to a very great extent unjust"¹⁵

Once again, the political strategy of the government would not have been so successful, had economic circumstances not supplied it with a firm basis. We must repeat here some observations made during our study of Sir Sayyid and his influence. We noted then, for example, that Sir Sayyid catered for a Muslim middle class still in its infancy, a class brought into being by and economically dependent upon the British imperialism that was now expanding its commercial and bureaucratic framework to

13. "Sir Auckland Colvin and myself"—Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

14. Above, p. 194, reference 7.

15. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

northern India. As British economic and cultural influences penetrated effectively into these areas, they produced there, as they had previously produced elsewhere, the circumstances (and the jobs) in which a pro-British group might flourish, a group in this case Muslim, and even communalist.

It was communalist, or potentially communalist, because of the contrast between it and the older, stonger groups of the professional classes in the more advanced (and only slightly Muslim) sections of the country. These older groups were already beginning to outgrow their opportunities, and to feel themselves strong enough to venture asking for more opportunities. They consequently began to organise themselves, to press, albeit most respectfully and loyally, their demands. The first middle-class organisation to appear was founded in Calcutta in 1875, the Indian Association. It petitioned for more jobs. During the following decade, this movement spread, and various others made their sporadic appearance. A growing restlessness was evident. The Indian National Congress met annually from 1885, and from the beginning gathered to itself virtually the entire movement of middle-class discontent and political consciousness.

One of the aims of the Indian Association was to foster middle-class unity in India, and especially Hindu-Muslim unity. In Calcutta a political organisation of middle-class Muslims was formed in 1885. It joined with two other groups in organising the second National Conference held that same year, also in Calcutta. The Conference later gave way to the Congress. It is true that the first Congress, at Bombay, 1885, was attended by only two Muslims; it is equally true, and less often noticed, that the second, at Calcutta in the following year, was attended by thirty-three; and the sixth session, at Calcutta, 1890, had out of a total of 702 delegates, 156 Muslims, or 22%.

These and similar facts make it clear that, in spite of the large group of middle-class Muslims still in the early, pro-British stage, yet the division between the loyal and the not-quite-so-loyal middle classes was not identical with the division between Muslim and non-Muslim middle classes. None the less, the two divisions were in fact close enough to each other that a plausible

case could be, and was, made out for confusing them.

Rather than saying that the Muslim middle class was economically more backward, and more pro-British, than the Hindu middle class, it would be more accurate to say that the economically backward, pro-British middle class was more Muslim than was the older, stronger, now fault-finding middle class. However it is put, herein lies the economic basis for the growth of communalism.

It was this situation alone which made Sir Sayyid Ahmad finally into something of a communalist. Inheriting the communal approach from the previous British policy of disavoursing Muslims as a group, he spent a good deal of his energy attempting to erase the impression of Muslim group disloyalty. A large and important class of loyal Muslims was gathering around his leadership, when the nationalist movement began. That movement distressed him; he and his class could not appreciate the anti-government policy. He was not, of course, able to persuade those few Muslims who were members of the economically advanced sections, not to join the nationalist movement. But he was able to persuade the many Muslim members of the less advanced sections, who did not want to join it anyway, that they should not join it "as Muslims".

Thus middle-class thinking about politics in communal terms was off to a good start. As yet, it did not involve inter-communal antagonism and hatred, but simply distinction. It has slowly developed since then, encouraged by a constant interplay of developing political and economic and religious processes, into the furious rivalry of the present day.

Politically, Whitehall continued to play off one community against the other, and to encourage communalist thinking in political and other matters. The intensification of such tactics, however, was left for the twentieth century.

Economic developments were more dramatic. During the period 1890-1905, middle-class movements passed through a radically new phase. The newer, weaker, groups were already beginning to reach the stage of mild criticism; "Muslims" were beginning to see some sense in suggesting improvements to the

government. But meanwhile the older, richer, more established groups, branching out now from clerical and professional activities to industry, were passing far beyond that stage to a new and aggressive one of vibrant nationalism. They now not only criticised the government, but actively, even violently, opposed it. Moreover, these advanced groups were now predominantly Hindu not only in composition but also in ideology. They developed a fervent and very romantic nationalism. It was bitterly anti-Western; and it drew its inspiration from a romanticised past. (Just as the Hindu middle classes, developing earlier, had earlier produced in the Brahmo Samaj their parallel to Sir Sayyid Ahmad's universalist movement; so now they produced, again earlier, in the Arya Samaj and its fellows, their parallel to aggressive Islamic "liberalism". Politically, the parallel is between the Bengal radicalism and the later Khilāfat movement.)

A glamorous picture of ancient Hindu society was painted. Religious movements, for instance those of Dayananda, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, rose and flourished; they became important parts, and in some ways the most obvious parts, of nationalism. A representative leader of the movement, B.G. Tilak, was politically progressive, socially reactionary; he first entered politics to oppose with vehemence the Age of Consent Bill, and he organised the Cow Protection Society. Tinged with mysticism, the movement revelled in religious enthusiasm: it was aggressively and exuberantly Hindu.

For a long while it was hardly anti-Muslim; just as the Khilāfat movement later, aggressively and exuberantly Muslim, was not anti-Hindu. None the less the intensity of Hinduism involved distinguished it effectively along communal lines. This was especially true in the minds of those middle-class Muslims who were still economically undeveloped enough to disapprove of its anti-British "extremism" in any case. Then in 1905 the movement reached its climax with Lord Curzon's communalist Partition of Bengal. This piece of imperialist strategy was explosive to Indian nationalism: the resentment that it provoked and the violent opposition were fiery. The pro-British Muslims, on the other hand, were pleased; and the question became a

Hindu Muslim issue—as had perhaps been planned. The nationalist ardour, already Hindu, became an anti-Muslim frenzy. For the first time in the modern period there was a widespread and fierce antagonism between the two communities as communities. Besides, the nationalists adopted an economic boycott of foreign goods. This scathing weapon harmed the British capitalists, and was a great boon to those Indians who had native goods to sell. But few Muslims were among that economically advanced class. By 1905 industrialisation, though still pitifully slight compared with that of other countries, was no longer negligible in India. Yet most middle-class Muslims were still professionals or clerks, not mill-owners. They had nothing to gain from the use of Indian rather than foreign goods; in fact, the boycott merely raised the prices of things that they bought.

From this point on, the government developed its policy of communalism in real earnest. In 1906—as we shall see in a later chapter—the Muslim League was formed, following a deputation to the Viceroy of a small group of “prominent,” that is, upper-class, Muslims. There is a good deal of evidence that the initiative for this deputation came from the government itself. Whether it did or not is, however, a minor point; for the Government of India has never been in the habit of granting the requests of every group that approaches it. The fact that it did grant these particular Muslims’ requests simply shows that it had deliberately decided to encourage Muslim communalism. In the Minto-Morely reforms, it enforced separate electorates for Muslims, and for certain other groups; and ever since has intensified the principle, extending it to more and more electorates, of local bodies and the like, increasing the number of separatisms under it, and applying it also in appointments.

The first activities of the Muslim League were an almost word-for-word repetition, along communal lines, of those of the early Congress twenty years before. In a quite clerical atmosphere the men concerned, protesting their imperial loyalty, pointed out that they did not have quite enough influence nor enough jobs. At the first sessions, “the resolutions passed related to adequate Muslim representation in the new Councils,

to Muslim places in the public service, and to Muslim loyalty.”¹⁶ Thus have all middle classes in India cautiously expressed their first slight discontent.

From about 1912, however, the Muslim middle classes too began to turn anti-British. The nationalist movement during the following decade was consequently formidable. We shall study it at greater length in due course. Suffice it here to say that whereas communalism continued, in the sense that to an important degree both Muslims and Hindus fought the government as communities, each with its own organisation and ideology, nevertheless the two groups, however distinct, co-operated against their common foe. At the culmination of the movement after the war, Muslims and Hindus fraternised, and rejoiced in their co-operation and unity, to an unprecedented degree.

But when this nationalist movement was at its peak, and enthusiasm was raised to fever heat, it was abruptly discontinued. Suddenly, after an incident at Chauri Chaura, Gandhi, “in penitence for violence,” called off the whole struggle. This surrender came as a sudden and devastating shock. There followed years of expansive profits and satisfied loyalty for a minute group of Indian capitalists; but for most of the country there was nothing but a sudden, hopeless, inactive discontent, that was emotionally intense, even morbid. The Muslims’ leaders had throughout been considerably more radical than Gandhi, and their middle class supplied very few of the capitalists who eventually capitulated. It was easy, therefore, for many Muslims, who had been communally conscious all during the struggle, to feel that they had been betrayed by “the Hindus,” and to regret their alliance with that community. The large majority of Hindus also suffered, dazed and uncomprehending. The lower middle classes and central middle classes of both groups sank into an aimless discontent. (The fact was that both had been betrayed by the *haute bourgeoisie*.) Much of their frustrated emotion found its way into communal bitterness. Even the lower classes imbibed something of the poisoned atmosphere: every struggle of the dispossessed was given a communal tinge.

From this period communalism has been a serious and all-pervading vitiation of Indian affairs, and increasingly so. Psychologically, it is like a habit-forming drug which, so long as it is administered, is needed in ever-increasing doses.

The Hindu Mahasabha, a communalist and reactionary Hindu organisation, flourished in these and the following few years. It made much communalist capital out of the Moplah uprising.¹⁷ In 1924 there was a bitter crop of communal riots, and Hindu-Muslim relations were alarmingly strained. Gandhi fasted, and a Unity Conference met, but practically nothing was achieved. The delegates to the Conference were recognised leaders of their communities, but they had neither real authority over the groups that they represented, nor control over the conditions that were producing the antagonisms. Nor did their religious approach to the problems admit much solution. The communal situation in the country reached a low ebb.

In 1928 the constitutional aspect of communalism was approached again by the Congress and its allies, when the moderates' "Nehru Report" was issued. (This report gave a suggested constitution for India with Dominion Status, and threatened Civil Disobedience if it was not accepted by the British within a year.) The Congress-League Lucknow Pact twelve years before, part of the nationalist communal alliance, had presumably lapsed. The Nationalist Muslim leaders accepted the communal provisions of the new scheme. The communalist Muslims were frittering away their energies in petty disunion. One group of them was ready to accept the Report with certain amendments; but the amendments were refused by the Congress. The next year the main groups, after this rebuff, united, to draw up "Fourteen Points" of their own as an alternative to the communal provisions of the Nehru Report. At the time, however, this was not very important, for the communalists who made the proposal, even when temporarily united, were more famous than representative, and commanded little support. They had virtually no following outside the middle classes, nor was their leadership unquestioned even within them. But the

17. See below, pp. 239 f.

issue has since been raised to monumental significance; it is being pointed out that the Congress refused to placate the Muslim separatists at a time when their demands were moderate.

The bickerings and sullen emotion of those years, however, gave way in 1930, when the Civil Disobedience movement swept practically the whole country into its activities. This nationalist movement differed from its predecessors in the extent to which the masses were organised along with the bourgeoisie. It differed also (and relatedly to this) in that individuals fought generally not as members of two communities which were allied, but as members of one vast country. Nationalism became the ideology of the day. Communal antagonisms were forgotten; moreover, communal distinctions were suspended. (This, of course, does not mean that religion or even religious distinctions were suspended.) The movement was a mighty effort, of a people struggling to be free; and it showed that, when engaged in that struggle, the people, without being united in religion, were quite capable of being united in political ideals and in action. They worked, fought, and suffered, together; with gladness.

The movement was, however, finally suppressed by the Empire; with ruthless force, and, in the case of the middle and upper classes, also by clever divisive tactics around a table. On the one hand was severe repression: rule by "drastic and severe" ordinance (Sir Samuel Hoare¹⁸), some hundred thousand arrests,¹⁹ and "violence, physical outrage, shooting and beating up, punitive expeditions, collective fines on villages, and seizure of lands."²⁰ On the other hand communalism was raised as the major issue, and has since become, almost explicitly, the chief prop of British rule in India. The government had chosen as delegates to the Round Table Conferences men who would not agree among themselves; whereupon the government itself announced its Communal Award. This was for a time accepted by most communalist Muslims, was rejected by Indian-nationalist Muslims, and embarrassed the Congress. The latter organ-

18. In the House of Commons; quoted in Palme Dutt, *History of the National Movement* (being illegal reprint of one of the chapters of that author's *India To-day*), p. 50.

19. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

20. *ibid.*

sation was unable to come to any decision on the matter for some while; finally (June 1934) it announced its neutrality, admitting that it could neither accept nor reject the Award so long as the division of opinion existed. The difficulty lay in the fact that to accept any communal settlement is, *ipso facto*, to recognise communalism as politically valid; which nationalism was not willing to do. At the same time, the unwillingness to repudiate communalism outright politically is evidence of how far communalism had (after the second great national defeat) penetrated the thinking of either the Congress leaders or, in their opinion, of the Muslims.

In 1937 the provincial elections were held. The franchise was extended to 30·1 millions, or 11% of the provincial population: the upper classes, the middle and lower middle classes, and the upper peasantry. Because of separate electorates, all these were forced to vote communally, whether they favoured communal distinctions or not. Only a small section of them, however, voted in favour of communalist organisations. For example, of the 7,319,445 Muslims who voted, only 321,772 voted for the Muslim League,²¹ that is, 4·4%. The communalism of the country's leaders, as opposed to the general run of even the voters (let alone the unenfranchised proletariat), is shown in the fact that the Congress ventured to contest only 58 of the 482 Muslim seats; and that of these 58, it won 26.

In general, the election results showed that, in 1937, communalism, though a strong and very noticeable force where it did operate, was confined as a decisive factor to a numerically small section of the country. The history of communalism since 1937 has been the story of the rapid intensification of communal passions and their rapid spread to a much larger section. The authorities and reactionary forces in India were thoroughly alarmed at the election results, and together strenuously set themselves to disrupt the nationalist movement by every means at their command. In addition, the forces within Indian nationalism making for separatisms have themselves developed.

21. Figures from *ibid.*, p. 413.

The new situation has been achieved for the Muslims, principally through the suddenly refurbished Muslim League. We shall therefore leave the story of further developments to study in some detail under that heading. Meanwhile let us examine somewhat how communalism works in modern India, and how it is encouraged by political and economic circumstances.

First, it is necessary to distinguish two kinds of communalism: middle-class and lower-class. The latter has been spasmodic and, when it occurs, intense; normally taking the spectacular form of what are known as communal riots. Once these have subsided, the individuals concerned have been quite capable of returning to normal relations with their fellows. Each riot certainly has meant some legacy of subsequent hatred, making the task of subsequent communalist propagandists easier. Yet the riots have been essentially incidents, occasioned by some disturbing factor other than religion. All careful observers, even when British and conservative, recognise that this disturbing factor is economic. In fact (as in the pre-British period), communal riots have been isolated instances of class-struggles fought in communal guise. For example, a British official writing of the Hindu-Muslim antagonism following the partition of Bengal, says: "The conflict came to a head in the dangerous Mymensingh disturbances of May 1907, which took the form of a general rising of the Muhammadan peasantry against their Hindu landlords and creditors."²² The Moplah Revolt, often considered the worst of the communal disturbances, was the uprising of oppressed and poverty-stricken peasants, as we shall presently see.²³ The virulent Bombay riots of 1929 were primarily struggles between mill-workers on strike and (deliberately chosen Muslim) Pathan strike-breakers. The official report said: "We are of opinion . . . that the attacks by the strikers and mill-hands were due primarily to the fact that the Pathans had taken the place of strikers at the Oil Installations, and, secondly, and to a lesser extent, to the fact that some of the Pathans are money-lenders who had

22. Sir Hugh McPherson, "Communal Antagonism," in Cumming (ed.), *Political India, 1832-1932*, p. 112.

23. See first page of Chapter Four of the present work.

advanced money to mill-hands at usurious rates of interest."²⁴ Examples such as this could be multiplied many times. They are generalised by the British commentator Garratt : "A map, showing the areas where Hindu Moslem outbreaks are most frequent, suggests that this added cause for irritation is really economic. The communities in these districts are divided into distinct economic groups. Thus, in the North-West, Hindus are the money-lenders and the Moslems are peasants ; in the North-East they are often landowners and the Moslems tenants. In the towns, and it is the towns where the feeling is worst, the shopkeepers, professional men, and employers are Hindu, the craftsmen and workers are usually Moslem."²⁵ Manshardt, a cautious American liberal, has to emphasise the economic factor ; and regarding the peasants he states : "There is scarcely a grave communal disturbance in the rural areas in which the thread of economic oppression cannot be distinguished in the tangled skein of causes."²⁶

The religious interpretation given to these conflicts may be uppermost in the minds of the men involved, arising from the fact that religion is the most obvious or most emotionalising distinction between them and the persons that they are fighting; or a very obvious and emotionalising distinction supplementary to the economic one. Or, the interpretation may be implanted in their minds by propagandists intent on arousing communal antagonism. We shall see, for instance, that the Muslim League constantly introduces the factor of economic oppression in its appeals for hatred of Hindus. Again, the religious interpretation given to the struggles may occur only in the newspaper accounts that are subsequently published, or in the propaganda of the India Office in its attempts to persuade the rest of the world and even itself that British rule in India is morally justified. For example, when the masses in Kashmir rose against their oppressive and absolutist ruler, in 1931-2, the trouble was presented

24. *Report of the Bombay Riots Inquiry Committee, 1929*, p. 14, as quoted in Manshardt, *The Hindu-Muslim Problem in India*, p. 58.

25. Garratt, *An Indian Commentary*, p. 177.

26. Manshardt, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

to the world as a communal disturbance, the inhabitants of Kashmir being mostly Muslims while the prince and the ruling class are Hindus.

In emphasising the fact that religion is not the efficient cause of communal riots, we do not mean to deny that when it is an accompanying factor it is an exceedingly important one. Religious passions are highly inflammable, and emotionally are of great driving force once aroused. Further, history has many times shown that religion is ready to excuse atrocities which decent men would hesitate to commit under any other name. Moreover, once a conflict has started for economic or other reasons and then assumes a communalist guise, it tends to expand to include innocent co-religionists of the real enemies. Also, it tends to colour the thinking of the persons involved for all their other issues. As we have said, once communalism is started, it is a growing evil. Its psychology is typical mob psychology, with more than a dash of religious neurosis.

When some particular Muslim cheats a Muslim, the latter thinks the former is a cheat. When some particular Hindu cheats the same Muslim, he thinks Hindus are cheats. Similarly, when the (Muslim) Bengal Government prohibits cow-killing in many places, as a preventive measure against riots, protests are feeble and anti-government; when a Congress government takes similar steps, protests are strident and anti-Hindu, and the cry is raised (and believed) that Islam is being emasculated and down-trodden.

Middle-class, especially upper-middle-class, communalism differs from that of proletariat and peasant. It is continuous, rather than spasmodic; and rather than expressing itself in violent group riots, it has taken the form of an individual bitterness and a persistent emotional attitude of suspicion, fear, and hatred. The basic reason for this difference is that communalism for the lower classes colours and interprets struggles primarily between classes, whereas for the bourgeois it colours and interprets personal competition within one class. Previously, as we have seen, upper and middle-class communalism too marked a distinction between classes: just after the Mutiny, between a

Muslim landlord class and a mostly Hindu professional class; at the time of Sir Sayyid Ahmad, between a new Muslim professional class and a more advanced, mostly Hindu, professional class; later, between a Muslim professional class and a Hindu industrial class. This kind of conflict continues to-day; in fact, this aspect has been reasserting itself during the Second World War, and we shall find further on in our study that communalism in its most recent form has perhaps again been most significantly the expression of group rivalry between a distinct Muslim bourgeoisie and a more advanced Hindu bourgeoisie. But to this conflict between groups was added what was for a time more important, intra-class competition: the struggle of individual Muslims and Hindus competing for the same jobs, contracts, or markets.

It is commonplace now to recognise that the communal antagonisms of India's middle class are due to the British imperial policy of "divide and rule". This is true, and we shall presently return to elaborate it. But it is not the whole truth; again we must insist that that policy could not have been so successful had not the economic conditions been conducive to its success. In fact, they were remarkably conducive to division, antagonism, and friction; for they were capitalist conditions.

It is observable all over the capitalist world that the capitalist economic system, particularly when it has reached (or as in India has had imposed upon it) the stage of not expanding rapidly, gives rise to fear, distrust, unbalanced emotionalism, aggressiveness, and the like, on the part of its middle-class participants. The reasons for this are not far to seek: the spectre of unemployment, the increasingly keen, even bitter, competition, the certainty that one man's gain is another's loss, the constantly increasing effort necessary for the same or a smaller return—all these things, added to the usual amorality and aesthetic ugliness, the chaos and meaninglessness, of capitalism, are responsible. A circumscribed capitalism produces the conditions under which communalism, or some parallel form of group discord, flourishes. The bourgeois, in his business world, faces a life that is emotionally and, in most other ways, unsatisfying. He is forced to

seek always to get the better of his neighbours, and is aware always that his neighbour is seeking to get the better of him. He is consequently supremely lonely, ready to join any group that will give him companionship and support ; and supremely suspicious, ready to attack, at least emotionally, any group on whom he can blame the horrors of bourgeois life. Most of all, he is supremely afraid; and fear unbalances a man's emotions, his intellect, his personality.

The task, therefore, of the agitator who would conjure up group-consciousness, and then set one group against another, is easy. He has been at work, and his success has been formidable, in Germany—Aryans and Jews ; in Czechoslovakia—Sudeten Germans and others ; in Poland ; and so on and so forth. Elsewhere, too, the conditions are obviously ripe for conflicts to be incited as soon as it is in anyone's interest to incite them. Meanwhile in the capitalist West the Second World War has acted as a very efficient outlet for the emotions involved—both for the desire for group-consciousness and group security, and for aggressive hatred.

In India, middle-class unemployment has been enormous. The chances of a young man's finding any lucrative employment, even on graduating from a university, have been small. If he does succeed, it is only by keeping dozens of his former friends from their chance. The few who do succeed are in constant fear of being ousted from the brutal struggle by competitors who may have had a better or an earlier start, better "connections," better ability, fewer scruples. Especially his competitors who adhere to a different community he distrusts and finds obnoxious: his co-religionists he meets socially, after business hours, and finds that after all they are really decent persons like himself, and not the grasping, unco-operative, "money-mad" men that one would imagine if one had no dealings with them—as one has almost no dealings with members of a different community—except within the capitalist economic system. Even otherwise-liberal American business men think that Jews "are interested only in making money" : even broad-minded Muslims imagine that Hindus confine themselves to that *came* pursuit.

And the suspicion seems to be well founded in so far as the Muslim, still with something of his feudal traditions of magnanimity and the feudal emphasis on spending wealth, is up against not the chivalrous Rajput of Hindu feudalism, but the deep-seated *banya* of the narrow-minded trading caste, with his age-long business traditions of clever calculation and the commercial emphasis on acquiring wealth.

Capitalist society is favourable to the growth of communalism. Indian capitalist society is especially favourable to the growth of Muslim communalism. All over the world the petty bourgeoisie, small traders, small independent producers, and the like, are being slowly forced into ruin, at the very best into the fear of it, by "big business". Now the big business of India is owned and controlled either by foreigners, or by a few men who are, incidentally, Hindus or Parsis. Many of the petty bourgeois who are Muslims are ready to believe in the danger of the non-Muslims oppressing them. The same applies even to village artisans and pre-capitalists who are being ruined by the advent of machine-made goods.

We have already noted that the immediate beneficiaries of the movement to "Buy Only Indian Goods" have been the Indian industrialists — which group until very recently has hardly included Muslims.

The professional classes also feel themselves at a disadvantage with "the Hindus"; which means, with the corresponding group of Hindus. For the latter, being more advanced economically and with a longer tradition of British clerical education behind them, can produce a larger number of candidates with high academic standing, or a large number with a higher standing, than "the Muslims" can muster, when a post is to be filled. An eloquent comment on the comparative backwardness of Muslim education is the charge levelled by the Muslim League in its *Pirpur Report* on atrocities: that the Congress Government of Madras was discriminating against Muslims in appointment to the services "by raising the standard of qualifications".²⁷

Thus, in addition to the *fact* of being less advanced, economically and otherwise, than the Hindus, there is also for the Muslim bourgeois community the feeling of being less advanced: a sense of inferiority that haunts the conscience and, suppressed, demands compensation. The middle-class Muslim, lonely and frightened in a bitter world, is driven to seek security in his group; but by doing so he becomes a member of what he knows is a backward group, so that he seeks prestige for his community almost as much as he seeks power through it.

There is in the country a high, probably even overwhelming, percentage of middle-class Muslim families who have felt the Hindu-Muslim conflict personally, and paid dearly in it: families in which at least one member has failed to get a job, a promotion, or a merited reward, which he would have got had the giving been in the hands of Muslims. The Muslim middle class is suffering, economically and psychologically, for reasons which are worldwide, socio-economic, and abstruse. But to a large extent it is suffering at the hands of certain Hindus, in a way that is immediate and obvious. Frustration produced aggression; and India is a frustrated country. We have been studying till now how a situation for India and for Islam had been produced which cannot be understood without the insight of the economist and sociologist. That situation is so demoralising to those caught in it that their reactions to it and within it will hardly be further understood without the insight of the psychopathologist.

There is still one more aspect of communalism: that in which it is a form of nationalism. Note the insistent cry recently, "the Muslims of India are a nation". Muslim communalism is the nationalist ideology adopted by the emergent and precarious Muslim middle class in its struggle against domination within India by the much more developed Hindu middle class.

Such are the predisposing circumstances in which the imperial government and the reactionary forces within India have pursued their policy of promoting and emphasising communal differences. If we ask what interests benefit from communal tension, and would be seriously disrupted if it were to disappear, the answer is clear: British imperialism, and the groups within

India whose position is dependent upon British imperialism—such as the princes, the landowners, some of the higher bureaucracy, and so on. Sometimes those groups have included also the entire bourgeoisie, afraid that Indian capitalism, still quite weak, would not survive against a workers' and peasants' socialist movement, if India became free. Further, it must be remembered that the individual leaders of the ardently communalist organisations would be deprived of their very considerable position, fame, and power, if inter-communal friendship were to replace antagonism.

A secretary of state for India, Lord Olivier, once admitted the playing-off of one community against another : "No one with any close acquaintance of Indian affairs will be prepared to deny that on the whole there is a predominant bias in British officialism in India in favour of the Moslem community, partly on the ground of closer sympathy but more largely as a make-weight against Hindu nationalism."²⁸ The government's method of encouraging communalism has been to approach all political subjects, and as many other subjects as possible, on a communalist basis ; and to encourage, even to insist upon, everyone else's doing likewise. The principal political technique is separate electorates : making the enfranchised Muslims, and the enfranchised sections of many other groups, into an increasing number of separate constituencies, so that they vote communally, think communally, listen only to communal election speeches, judge the delegates communally, look for constitutional and other reforms only in terms of more relative communal power, and express their grievances communally. Even the British government has admitted on occasions that the system serves to keep India from gaining independence by political means : "Division by creeds and classes means the creation of political camps organised against each other, and teaches men to think as partisans and not as citizens. . . . We regard any system of communal electorates, therefore, as a very serious hindrance to the develop-

28. Letter to the *London Times*, 10 July 1926; as quoted in *The Indian Quarterly Register*, 1926, Calcutta, vol. II (July-Dec. 1926), p. 101.

ment of the self-governing principle."²⁹ And as this same statement goes on to say, the principle works so well that once it has been firmly established, it so entrenches communalism that one could hardly then abandon the principle even if one wished to do so.

The communalist technique is introduced into economics as well as into politics. Unemployment, as we have said, is rife among the middle classes ; and the government dispenses its few but most attractive posts on a strictly communal basis. Each Muslim who does not secure employment is led to feel that he might well have done so if only the Muslim community had more communal power, the Hindu less. It is usually only on communal terms that he can get a job at all ; and within an economic system which provides employment for only a fraction of its society, the only hope of more positions is a communalist hope.

There are numerous other ways of stirring up communal feeling. For instance, men who advocate and encourage it are given titles and positions with vast salaries; those who work for union between the religious groups are in danger of imprisonment.³⁰ Again, the press censorship is rigid on nationalist questions, but does not operate against Muslim papers that advocate murder for apostasy. The British press has repeatedly attempted to stir up communal discord on nationalist movements, for example, insinuating that the Khudā'ī Khidmatgār are really anti-Hindu rather than anti-British.³¹ The censorship and the press together work, of course, to play up communalism for the outside world : abundant space has been given in conservative London papers to communalist questions, little to nationalist ones, and almost none to Indian-nationalist Muslims.

Similarly, for the Round Table Conference the British chose

29. Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, and Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy, *Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reforms*, given in Mukherji, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, vol. I, pp. 516 f.

30 "Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni . . . was arrested at Saharanpur yesterday" "while he was en route to Jbang to preside over the Hindu-Muslim Unity Conference there"—*The Tribune*, Lahore, 30 June 1942.

31. An example of a British editorial on this subject is quoted in Sen, *Testament of India*, p. 122.

as Muslim delegates men who were noted as ardent communalists, and allowed no Indian-nationalist Muslims to come near. British official circles have given copious and favourable attention to the Muslim League while it was representing but a small section of the Muslims, and have turned a blind eye to the other numerous and influential Muslim political organisations (except to imprison their leaders).

Few things infuriate some Muslim communalists more than to be told that communalism is not a religious problem. They know, from their own experience, and with all the intensity of their Muslim ardour, that it is religious. What they should be told is that it does not have a religious solution. The solution must be political and economic. Many of the religious factors can be allowed to remain ; must be allowed to remain, even, for the opposition to interfering with them is too tremendous. But it is the economic and political factors that must be manipulated, in order to save the country from the horrors of communalist hatred. If these are properly manipulated, even though the religious factors do continue, communalist hatred will disappear.

As far as the religious aspects of the question are concerned, we have examined how modern bourgeois Islam is tending to become increasingly communalist. The Muslim middle class could even be said to be substituting communalism for religion, in much the sense in which nationalism in the Western capitalist world can be said often to have taken the place of religion. We should note that, almost without exception, the orthodox religionists, the theological academies, and so on, have been opposed to the Muslim League and its communalist attitude, and have worked for Hindu-Muslim political unity. They have said, in the name of Islam, that communalism in India is religiously utterly unsound. The claim of these people to speak authoritatively in the name of religious Islam has been disputed by the sophisticated bourgeois. But at least we can state, on this basis, that communalism has been a religious issue only for those groups for whom it was also and already a political and economic issue.

The fact that, for many middle-class Muslims, communalism

is the most important part of their religion, if not the only part, throws much light on the problem of why Indian bourgeois Muslims are more conscious of their religion than are other bourgeois, whether Muslim or not, throughout the world. It suggests that were communalism to disappear, as it would disappear soon after its political and economic props were kicked away, then many bourgeois Muslims in India would be left quite secular. Capitalism has had the universal effect, whenever it has become firmly established, of producing situations in which the large majority of the middle classes have led predominantly secular lives. They have been atheist or agnostic, or amelist, or at most only nominally religious. This is as true of Cairo and Baghdad as it is of London or Madras. At first sight Indian Islam seems to offer an exception to this rule. But a careful reading of modern Muslim "religious" literature of the middle classes suggests that the exception is only apparent, confirming the hypothesis that without communalism many of these Muslims too would be Muslim in little more than name. For it is exceedingly difficult to discover what, if anything, they mean when they say "Islam," except the Muslim community and loyalty to it; or, more usually, the Indian Muslim community and loyalty to it; or even the Muslim League and loyalty to it. Usually they do not govern their lives by their religion in any other sense, their decisions are not influenced by it, their ideals and objectives do not derive from it. Often they do not know very much about their religion in any other sense. There is little concern with God; with personal salvation; with morality; with worship. Recently, it is true, efforts have been made to revive strict adherence to the Canon Law, in order to help preserve the community intact; but to impose that ancient code upon modern bourgeois life is clearly an artificial and a foredoomed move. Intelligent people as long ago as Sir Sayyid Ahmad and as recently as Iqbāl (in his better moments) knew that it neither could be, nor ought to be, done.

Related to this religiously conservative trend is the feeling on which batten the propaganda cries of "Islam is in danger," "Islamic culture is in danger." Naturally, any culture, any system,

of yesterday is in grave danger, in the fast-moving world of to-day. Society is changing, and will continue to change radically. If Islam, or any other religion, hopes to survive, it must adapt itself to the new world, must answer new questions and meet new needs. But men find it much easier to protest irately, than to work out those answers and those ways of meeting needs. Islam is indeed in danger; but the more conservative and the more communalist Islam is, the greater the danger.

And it is easy to let oneself be confused into thinking that the danger to Islam comes from Hinduism and the Hindus. If the menace is not the religiousness of Gandhi, then it is the irreligiousness of Nahrū (Nehru). Because "Hindu culture" in India is more industrialised than the less advanced "Muslim culture," therefore even the infiltration of Western bourgeois "materialism" can be interpreted as coming from (or at least by way of) the Hindus.

Less subtly, Islam is in danger in that the Muslim middle class and the Muslim lower classes are being oppressed and dominated by the more highly developed, expansive, "Hindu" middle-class capitalism.

Islam is indeed in danger too in the sense that the Muslim middle class is in grave danger of extinction, being a petty bourgeois class in a collapsing capitalist world.

Furthermore, in trying to understand middle-class communalism, one must not underestimate the terrific social pressure to conform. Some have been browbeaten into it, in a country that is not free. A surprisingly large number of young men have known that communalism is an incorrect approach; but as they have entered bourgeois life they have been forced to keep quiet on the subject, for fear of losing their positions or their clientele or their chance of ever getting either; or simply because they could do nothing about it. Gradually, as the years have gone by, they have adjusted themselves to their society, or else they have inwardly protested and have been inwardly frustrated; gradually they have succumbed or have been submerged. Society eventually dominates the individual, whether he be Babbit in Zenith or the Muslim in Lahore.

Not only Muslims are communalists, of course. The Hindu caste system both preaches and practises perhaps the most rigid social discrimination in the world. There are many centuries of tradition and the pressure of society, religion, and economics all urging the Hindu business man to treat the Muslim business man as outside the pale. Besides, communalism is a vicious spiral: the more one group is communal and separatist, the more the other group from which it is separate becomes self-conscious. It would be difficult for a Hindu, even with the best of natures, to be told for years, in a crescendo of frenzied invective, that he and his group are hated by all Muslims as a group, without being led to think in terms of those groups. This is in addition to the fact that most of the same predisposing factors to communalism are at work also in his case. (The chief difference is that the Hindu petty bourgeoisie, though threatened like the Muslim with extinction by the big industrialists in a moribund capitalism, cannot interpret that threat in communalist guise.) As soon as the Hindu is communalist, the Muslims' communalism is that much the more justified, and more intense. That encourages more Hindu communalism. And so it goes. As the India Office and other reactionaries had hoped, communalism needs only to be well started, and then it thrives of itself.

Communalism has grown to pervade all India, and there is truth in the charge that Hindus, including those in the Congress, have become more communally minded. This has inflamed the Muslims more than ever, and has assured them that the Congress is a Hindu communalist body, parallel to the Muslim League. The more both groups could be made to believe this, the more true it has become.

In recent years, Muslim communal intransigence increasingly became Britain's (verbal) excuse for continuing her oppression of the country ; and Hindus were therefore encouraged (by propaganda and by the facts of the case) to believe that "the Muslims" were sabotaging the Indian nationalist movement ; that it was the Muslims who were to blame for that movement's failure. The Hindus were virtually told, by the British and others, that were it not for the Muslims, they would be a free

nation. This was not a pretty situation. Muslims, sorely oppressed, were regarding Hindus as worse oppressors than the British; Hindus, sorely oppressed, were regarding Muslims as responsible for their oppression.

Eventually, communalism has vitiated thinking so that one cannot get away from it even if one tries. Communalism is bad; but the alternative of non-communalism has vanished. For example: when a post is vacant, it is impossible to fill it without appointing to it either a Muslim or a non-Muslim (in the communalist sense). It has been, in other words, impossible to make a move without raising a communalist quarrel. One can, admittedly, distribute appointments among the communities in nicely apportioned allotments; but that is merely being communally just, it is not being uncommunal. And claims as to what constitutes communal "justice" have been raucously discordant.

Hindus need not be politically communalist, in order to incite Muslims to separatist antagonism. Their being anti-communalist can lead to the same exasperation. Some Hindus and others have denied that the communal problem exists. They have maintained, and sincerely felt, that India should be treated as one nation, and no community should be discriminated either for or against. Questions should be posed without reference to the communities concerned. This attitude has seemed to an increasing group of Muslims to be equally damaging to their interests, and to be, in fact, sheer hypocrisy. For, since the Hindu middle class is more developed, better educated, wealthier, and more powerful industrially, than is the Muslim, therefore to treat both "equally" is in practice to encourage the already more advanced group. Since in a capitalist society there is not room for all, therefore to make no special provision for the weaker section is in fact to advantage the stronger. Similarly, since in India there are numerically more Hindus than Muslims, therefore the impartiality of a free democracy would be but a thin disguise for perpetual Hindu rule.

Recently this "anti-communal" attitude of the dominant bourgeoisie has become aggressive. The Hindu Mahasabha, representing the right-wing group within Hinduism, and the

champion in fact of communal distinctions, has declared itself for what would appear on the surface to be a nationalism devoid of communal touches. For example, it would abolish communal electorates and has declared for a constitution in which all citizens should be treated as equals, none being given any rights or privileges on the basis of religion. In response to the recent campaign for Congress-League unity on the basis of self-determination for minorities, the Mahasabha has threatened "direct action" to oust British imperialism from India and at the same time to keep the Indian Muslims within the sphere of their control. The annual session of the Mahasabha at the close of 1942 instructed the Working Committee "to devise ways and means for mobilizing the resources of the Hindus to cope with external aggression and national disorder and to prepare the Hindu forces to fight out this struggle efficiently" to wrest independence from the British and to "defend the integrity of India against the Pakistan Muslims."³²

So far, then, has the situation deteriorated that it has now become impossible to avoid communalism ; even for those who continue, and with good reason, to deplore it. And one must not, in one's efforts to understand it, forget to deplore. Communalism in India has meant the increasing vitiation of an already oppressed life. It has brought hatred and fear to poison human relations ; a poison that has eaten its way into the soul. Erstwhile companionship has been sundered, trust has been outlawed, and sullen resentment and degradation thrive. The things which a people deemed holy have been cast into the filth; and their sacred values have been used to stir up hideous passions and to bring disgust. Men can no longer be "religious" without being communal, and cannot be communal without succumbing to and abetting bitterness, suspicion, disruption, and ugly pride. Hospitals disintegrate, as the best physicians and surgeons are forced to make room for those whose claim is not ability but "community" ; and academic liberty and integrity vanish before the storm. Indian middle-class life in an orgy of communal

32. Resolution of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, Cawnpore, 31 Dec. 1942 (*The Statesman*, North India edition, 2 January 1943).

depravity celebrates the double decadence of a capitalist-imperialist society, and heads for a demoralisation that seems complete.

We have said that for long the lower classes in society were not involved in this type of communalism. It was purely a middle-class problem ; and progressive folk were able to dismiss it as such. By appealing to peasants and workers on economic issues, they would unite them as a class against the divided bourgeoisie and against imperialism; and could hope by this policy not indeed to "solve" the communal issue but to supersede it altogether by superseding capitalism. In the new society to which they summoned, there would be no exploitation of one group by another, none of the anxiety from insecurity or the distrust from competition. There would be instead glad co-operation and the equality of freedom.

For example : the proposition was ludicrous and false that "the Hindus control the cotton-mill industry of India". There were two hundred million and more Hindus who came about as near to controlling this or any other industry as did the average Indian village Christian to controlling America. To take the incidental fact that the handful of men who did dominate Indian industry were, nominally, Hindus ; and to infer from it that the industrial exploitation which Muslims suffered was the exploitation of the Muslim community by the Hindu community, was to reason distortedly. To act upon this reasoning was to act ineffectively or worse. More Hindus suffered from the industrial exploitation of "Hindus" (capitalists) than did Muslims. The only way to end that exploitation, whether of Muslims or Hindus, was, not to defeat Hinduism, but to supersede capitalism.

Communalist thinking has been distorted thinking. Pious folk have liked to imply that the difference between thinking in communal terms and thinking in, say, class terms, is the difference between a "spiritual" and a "materialist" attitude to life. Actually, it has been nothing of the sort. It has been simply the difference between confused thinking and clear.

Communalism has been produced by and has flourished because of certain conditions inherent in the present structure of Indian society. Progressives knew that it would not disappear until India was free, progressive, co-operative, prosperous—until

India was socialist. (Even then, of course, its corpse would only with difficulty be disposed of.) Within the present order, there has been no solution ; outside of it, there would be no problem.

But during the last few years the constantly evolving situation has entered a new phase. Communalism has expanded to involve also the progressives. The dynamic elements of the bourgeoisie, the young intellectuals, the middle-class left wing striving to create a better world ; and even the lower classes in so far as they are politically conscious ; have taken part. Their ideology too has been framed in communal categories. This may be seen as a sign of how successful the reactionaries, British and indigenous, have been, in their disruptive and misleading tactics ; they have managed to divert even the mass of the people (as they had diverted the conservative middle classes) from a united nationalist front. And yet, they would not have been so successful had not the developing economic processes within India been such as to favour their game. The new phase may, therefore, be regarded also as indicating how successful the secondary middle classes in India have been, the Muslim and other bourgeoisies in their struggles against the dominant Hindu one ; they have enticed their own lower classes to support them in their separatist demands. But these in their turn would not have been so successful either, had the forces within the lower classes themselves not played somewhat into their hands. Finally, therefore, one must see in the new phase also a sign of the masses' striving towards freedom in new terms ; in the limited cultural terms that they can understand.

The situation is new in that the anti-communist cry is being used by the Hindu reactionaries to cover a programme of exploitation. This can be understood only at the level of economic development. Capitalism has developed in India, as in Europe, unevenly. In some areas and groups the process began earlier and has proceeded farther than in others. By now, the earliest and most powerful capitalist group, which may be called "Hindu" for lack of a more precise name, has developed to a point where it is ready to dominate the entire country ; while other capitalist groups, in more remote areas, emerged and have

developed to a point where they are ready to resist that domination. Numerous separatist movements arose during the late 1930's: not only the Muslim, but in Andhra and other areas. Nationalism, it must be remembered, is a bourgeois enthusiasm: an emotion that, though it finally extends also to the lower classes, arises with an arising bourgeoisie. The "Hindu" middle classes, who have been running the dominant capitalism within India, have throughout been the dominant leaders of the anti-British Indian nationalism (and of that nationalism's organisation, the Congress). For long they were able to bring into their anti-British following, under that emotion of Indian nationalism, virtually all the alert inhabitants of the country. We shall devote a subsequent chapter to studying the Muslims' participation in the Indian nationalist movement.

Recently those "Hindu" middle classes have not only been seeking to free themselves from foreign imperialist subjection, but have also been seeking more and more to control and exploit the whole of India. They want to sell their goods, to invest their money, to find lucrative positions, and to extend their culture, over as large an area as possible. (Even abroad: the stimulus of the Second World War has given them a chance to launch imperialist ventures. Since 1940 Indian capitalists, especially from the cotton mills, have been importing raw materials and exporting manufactured goods, particularly with regard to East Africa.³³) Their aim is to expand and to exploit with as little opposition as may be. This is the normal drive of any bourgeoisie. Being a bourgeoisie, they must crush any upstart and rival bourgeoisie that seeks to develop within their sphere of influence. They must treat any nascent Muslim or other separatist nationalism in much the same manner as the British bourgeoisie has treated them.

In this context, then, the 1942 Mahasabha resolution to fight Pakistan is understandable. But in this context equally understandable is the opposition of the separatist groups. The

33. Based on statements made by Dr D. C. Ghose, in a lecture to the Datta Officers' Training School, Forman Christian College, Lahore, 5 October 1942.

middle class in Karnatak, the middle class of Muslims, driven by the same inexorable law of capitalist development, emerge, gain some strength (especially, again, with the stimulus to capitalism in India of the Second World War), and seek freedom from this domination. They seek freedom just as this more developed group desperately seeks freedom from the British.

Liberal thinkers have deplored the emergence of embattled nationalisms all over India at a time when in the West the folly of nationalist divisions and ideologies has at last become patent. They feel that "man" should have outgrown nationalist ideas. At the level of thought, they are right so to deplore. But they forget that, at the level of economics, India is at a stage approximating that of Europe in the nineteenth century.

Middle-class Muslims are opposed to the domination and exploitation of all India by "Hindu" Big Business (now symbolised in the state capitalism of the 1944-5 Bombay Plan) not only for economic reasons. The Muslim bourgeoisie is indeed determined to resist economic suppression or subordination at the hands of the "Hindu" monopoly capitalist group. But they are opposed also for liberal and religious reasons. And those reasons are (within limits) valid. The young Muslim idealist—sensitive to values which monopoly capitalism, he knows, will crush—can write sincerely and convincingly of the dangers of the Muslims' losing their soul. "Capitalism is bad enough anywhere. But the Bania³⁴ capitalism built on the abysmal ignorance of the teeming millions of India supported by the so-called National Government will be the worst fascism the world has ever seen. Muslims propose to resist it by whatever means that are available to them. . . . The only way a Muslim tradesman can compete with a Hindu is to beat him on his own grounds, that is to say, live miserly, accept interest and employ all other dirty tricks of the trade. In other words, a Muslim is obliged to bid good-bye to his innate notions of life and accept those of his Hindu competitor. Subjugation can mean nothing else."³⁵ Using arguments such as these, the idealist, opposed

34. *Banyā* : the Hindu merchant, famous even among Hindus for his ruthless acquisitiveness.

35. Suleri, *The Road to Peace and Pakistan*, pp. 99, 101.

(perhaps unwittingly) to all capitalism, can co-operate with the emergent Muslim capitalist group to resist the highly developed "Hindu" one. He either overlooks or else denies with religious ³⁶ eloquence, the fact, obvious to a realist, that capitalism in Pakistan, even though "Muslim," would (like "Hindu" capitalism in India, or like "Muslim" capitalism in Egypt) also be capitalism and hence also would be evil. He feels—if more acute, he may explicitly recognise—that Muslim capitalism in India, being now much less developed, will be more tractable than the already monopolist power of the Birla-Tata group. Moreover, he feels with passion that Islam (for instance, working through himself), with its strong and practical tradition of social justice, will curb the worst evils of capitalism, in a way that Hinduism, which he despises, neither tries nor pretends to do.

Recently the peoples of the "Muslim" areas, economically and culturally the least developed in India, have not been stirred to action and enthusiasm by appeals from the industrialised centre and south. For themselves and their immediate fellows, they have seen no freedom in replacing a British master by an Indian one. They have not responded to an all-India programme which, they felt, will leave their peoples in a cultural backwater and their homelands as an agricultural hinterland exploited for raw materials and a market by the distant and alien centres of "Hindu" civilisation. On the other hand, when they have heard the slogan of self-determination their response has been large, and they have been incited to progress. The Muslim feels that the Muslim community is "his own people"; he feels that that people is educationally, socially, economically underdeveloped. But he becomes an enthusiast if he can foresee his people free and equal, self-governing, self-developing, and an honoured partner along with other communities in an independent India, working towards the evolution of its own industries and its own culture.

Take, for instance, one question out of many: whether Defence in a British-free India is to be under the jurisdiction of

36. For instance, *ibid.*, pp. 62ff.

one central authority or two. This becomes a question not only of protecting India against foreign attack—for this the Muslim is ready and eager that Pakistan should work in co-ordination with Hindustan; though not in subordination to it. But it is also a question of controlling the army as ultimate arbiter of internal social disputes; of recruitment and distributing officers' jobs; and of allotting contracts, of planning and developing and locating industry. The Muslim capitalist has chosen that these matters should be in the hands of his own Pakistan government; so has the Muslim idealist, eager to serve his people. That idealist, keen on the rapid industrialisation of the outlying backward Muslim areas, on expensive social service and a planned economy and national life, has seen no other way whereby his fellows can move forward quickly. He has felt, not without reason, that he could not trust alien Hindu interests either to plan adequately for the alien Muslims or to administer plans with sympathetic devotion.

Meanwhile the lower classes in India are developing also. The proletarian and peasant forces are maturing in India at approximately the same time as these imperialist-retarded bourgeois forces. And it is within these new multi-nationalist ideologies that the masses of the people also are struggling for their freedom. It is significant that the rise of the new minor "nationalisms" in India has coincided more or less with the awakening of the peasantry. Since the time of the 1937 elections, when the Indian nationalist movement reached its most radical policy and went furthest in its contact with the villages, the peasantry has bestirred itself mightily—and largely in local "nationalist" form. Within the Congress itself, language-group "provinces" have had to be recognised. Partly as the result of propaganda, partly because of its social status, the peasantry of various sections of India has awakened to political consciousness and to a struggle for freedom, in terms of local culture and of minor traditional groups.

This fact has been used (it was even partly created) by the reactionaries to disrupt the united Indian-nationalist demand. It has been used by the several bourgeoisies to strengthen their

separatist struggles. But it remains a fact.

For example, the Muslim peasantry, in Bengal and in the North-West, has been responding to the appeal of Muslim nationalism as it never did to that of Indian. It has become awake and vibrant, and the stirring of the freedom urge has been mightier under communal guise than it ever was before. Villages where previous political movements did not penetrate have grown alert and thirsting for progress; peasants otherwise dormant will gladly move forward *as Muslims*. Not that this type of communalism has been anti-Hindu: the Muslim League official who has appealed to these Muslim villagers by attacking the Congress has evoked little response, while the one who has appealed for Muslim solidarity under the League in alliance with the Congress, to attack feudalism and the British, has evoked a peasant movement.

And we shall see later on, in our detailed discussion of Muslim political bodies and particularly the Muslim League, that even the important Muslim groups opposed to the League substantiate rather than contradict our analysis. For latterly they have been opposed, not because the League's separatism is too narrow, but because it is too broad. Muslims in the Frontier province, in Kashmir, and even in Sind, have moved towards demanding self-determination each for its respective local nationalism: Pathan, Kashmiri, Sindhi. They represent movements within the Pakistan area instructively similar to the Pakistan movement itself within India.³⁷

The new situation in India has an instructive parallel in the condition of the Tsarist Russian Empire about 1912. There the dominant bourgeoisie was the Great Russia, attempting to control and subjugate the entire country, economically and culturally. The middle classes of the outlying nationalities, much less developed, resented and suffered under this subjugation; and they struggled desperately for their own freedom to exploit. They harnessed the democratic sentiment of their respective masses to their separatist nationalisms; and the peoples longed for freedom in nationalistic guise. Meanwhile the reactionaries used these

37. See *infra*, Chapter Five, section : The Most Recent Phase : 1942 ff.

divergencies. They played off one against another, and, giving freedom to none of these struggling groups, they maintained the *status quo*.

At the present time, then, there are three main aspects of the communal problem in India. One is its creation and use by the reactionaries, British imperialism and the landed interests and so on in India; reactionaries endeavouring to divert energy from the fundamental Indo-British struggle; and endeavouring so to disrupt and to vitiate Indian corporate life as to render it demoralised and helpless. Secondly, there are the bourgeois forces, divided among themselves and each struggling for power : for freedom from domination from above, for freedom to dominate below. Thirdly, there are the masses of the people, amongst whom the mighty thrust towards freedom—freedom from all domination—is being couched in communal or local-nationalist terms.

Until 1942 it was the first of these forces that was supreme: the reactionaries. Communalism served primarily their purposes. Since then, the middle classes have shown signs of capturing communalism for their ends. We shall study these two trends in some detail in our discussion of the Muslim League. Meanwhile we must note that the progressive also are no longer fighting against these developments but have begun grasping them realistically and striving to guide them forward along humanity's path. They have turned to utilise these cultural ideologies, and to unite the groups as equal partners in a joint struggle for a free and socialist and multi-national India, in which each may flower in total freedom and develop fully its distinctive contribution.

Which of these three forces will win out is as yet (winter 1945) undecided. The decision will be fateful for the country; and the struggle between them, within the communal organisations, is terribly important. We shall examine that organisational struggle in a later chapter. At the level of reflection, the problem has been, using the communal categories, to find a basis for communal harmony; so that the relation between the groups be one of friendship, not of enmity. It is possible also to abandon those categories and to take a broader view—at the

level of reflection; but at the level of organisation, it seems hopeless to expect the Muslims and others to abandon their communal parties and join a broader group. If, indeed, the battle against communalism in India has been lost—and to-day no influential group is fighting it—then the task is certainly to devise means that will bring the religious communities into concord with each other. Perhaps it is now too late, if indeed it was ever possible, to work and hope for an India, or a Bengal or a Lahore, that will be an integrated society of individuals, living together as one social community. Perhaps the situation has gone so far that even under socialism man, who to live well must live as the member of some group, will in India choose his groups according to the religion of his forefathers. And perhaps he will flourish the more by so doing.

In any case, if the people of India do not co-operate, their future, like their present, will be disaster. If they cannot work together as individuals, let them work together as groups. If the Hindus and Muslims cannot co-operate as human beings for a better world, let them co-operate as religious communities. However it be done, the essential truth is that they must co-operate.

Chapter Two

THE PAN-ISLAMIC, KHILĀFAT AND RELATED MOVEMENTS

About 1912 political discontent in India spread to a large number of influential Muslims; and they expressed that discontent as a Muslim group. Modern Muslim political consciousness is accordingly said to have begun in India at that time; but such a statement needs considerable qualification, since Muslim peasants had been rebelling against the British and others, particularly under the "Wahhābī" ideology, for nearly a century. What happened in the period beginning just before the First World War was that the new middle classes among the Muslims, on whom the government had previously depended, and who were educated and vocal, and could hardly be ignored or crushed, outgrew their dependent position within the imperial system, and began also to express their dissatisfaction. As the Hindu middle classes had done when they reached a similar stage some decades before, they took to a religious ideology. We have already observed the "liberal" Islam that they elaborated for themselves religiously. Politically, they adopted a pan-Islamic form under which to couch their complaint.

The ruthless immorality, and the acquisitive, destructive aggression, of European imperialism presented itself to the minds of most educated Indian Muslims more clearly and forcibly in British and other Western policy in the Near East than in British policy in India. At the end of the nineteenth century, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, the reactionary Şultān of Turkey, had launched his pan-Islamic programme. He did so in an effort to save his tottering regime from external attack, and from the growing nationalist democratic movement at home. The idea had attracted little attention in India. Even the brilliant Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, chief theoretical exponent and organiser of the Islamic political renaissance which it implied, had only a few isolated Indian dis-

ciples. In 1908 the old Khalīfah and his regime had been overthrown by the "Young Turks"; and pan-Islam had lapsed completely.

Four years later, in Muslim India, it was revived, to serve quite a new purpose. The middle-class Muslims there saw in the Italo-Turkish war and the Balkan wars a clear expression of what they were vaguely beginning to feel: that Western imperialism, specifically British, was conquering and destroying their culture (that is, Islamic culture) and oppressing Muslims. They began to read new anti-British poems and essays, and expressions of sorrow over loss of power suffered by any Islamic people in the past, or being suffered at the present, or about to be suffered, apparently, by all of them very soon at the hands of the destructive, domineering West. Muslim literary figures poured forth their discontent, and their works were warmly received. Akbar's caustic epigrams and satires, Shiblī's wistful and pungent *Trouble in the Balkans*,¹ Iqbāl's nostalgic ode to once Arab Sicily² and his powerful, puzzled *Complaint*³ to God—these and much else in the same vein roused the middle-class Muslim discontent, and satisfyingly gave it expression.

These writings did not, however, contemplate doing much about the situation.

More particularly political were four periodicals which appeared at this time and to which Muslims subscribed in great numbers. One was Abul Kalām Āzād's *Al-Hilāl*, Calcutta: a brilliant paper, written in a new, moving style, amazingly forceful. It was illustrated, and was printed from type. Its influence was prodigious, especially among the great. Āzād was politically and religiously radical. The paper, edited by this prominent theologian, shocked the conservatives, and created a furore; but there were many Muslims ready to follow him. *Al-Hilāl* had a circulation of 11,000 within six months of its founding (i.e. by

1. *Hangāmah i Balqān*. There is a translation of this into English in 'Abdu'l-Latīf, *The Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature*, pp. 113 f.

2. "Şiqilliyah" in *Bāng i Darā*, pp. 141 f.

3. "Shikwah," *ibid.*, pp. 177 ff.

the end of 1912), and reached 25,000 during the war.⁴ It fearlessly attacked the government, and was presently suppressed. "Few papers in the history of Indian journalism have exercised an influence compared [*sc.* comparable] to that of *Al-Hilal*."⁵

Another influential paper of this period was the *Zamīndār* of Lahore, edited by a born rebel, Zafar 'Alī Khān. He was profoundly anti-British, and his vigorous agitations had large influence. He was issuing 20,000 copies of his paper twice a day—an unheard-of circulation for the vernacular press; for the first time the Muslims of north India were awakening to a news-consciousness, and awakening mightily. They eagerly drank in the seditious propaganda that the *Zamīndār* offered them.

The other two papers were published by Muḥammad 'Alī, later leader of the whole Khilāfat movement: the *Comrade*, in English, and *Hamdard*, in Urdu. They were published from Delhi,⁶ and attracted much attention. Their interest in and protests about Muslim politics were a gradual growth, but were soon robust and formidable. This editor believed in organised moves as well as in the dissemination of propaganda: for instance, he took a prominent part in getting together a "Red Crescent" medical mission to Turkey under Dr Anṣārī, 1912, and in the protests and deputations about the Cawnpore mosque incident of the following year. (The latter was evoked by the government's undertaking to demolish part of a mosque in connection with widening a street. Similar government action on previous occasions had passed unnoticed; but this time opposition was virulent.)

The Muslims' excitement about the attacks on Turkey found an outlet in sacrificing for that country and sending it aid. The actual delegates who went with Dr Anṣārī to Turkey came back

4. Figures from Desai, *Mawlana Abul Kalam Azād*, pp. 47 and 54 respectively

5. Meherally, *Leaders of India*, p. 6.

6. The *Comrade* was published first in Calcutta, but its significance and its nationalism came only after it followed the central government to the new capital.

quite disillusioned,⁷ but most Muslims continued to know little of that distant country, and their ideals remained unshattered. The Cawnpore mosque incident is interesting in having brought the object of discontent momentarily nearer home: it was the only Muslim issue until well into the war that was admittedly Indian-nationalist.

Then the First World War broke out. The fact that it was being fought for imperialist aims, and was not in the interests of the people involved (specifically the Indian Muslims) but rather the contrary, was demonstrated and symbolised for those Indian Muslims primarily by the fact that the British Empire was attacking, among other enemies, Muslim Turkey. The government soon suppressed the inflammatory periodicals that we have mentioned, and put the editors and other Muslim leaders in internment or jail. The first year or two of the war saw a lull in the intensity of anti-British feeling among the middle classes; though the feeling itself continued. Meanwhile in the Punjab the *Ghadr* movement (1914-5), a revolutionary conspiracy of all communities, although it was fiercely suppressed, stirred up the rural folk. As the war proceeded—with its inevitable worsening of economic and other conditions in India, as elsewhere—discontent grew. By the end of 1917 the government decided to appoint the ill-famed Rowlatt Commission to investigate the growing revolutionary movement in the country, and to report on how to deal with it. These lower-class movements were not particularly Muslim, nor were their ideologies religious, but they indicated and encouraged the readiness of the lower classes to join in any radical move. Another group disaffected were the Indian soldiers. Many came back much more “aware” than they had been on leaving home; many did not come home at all, and their death was both mourned and resented. Now a predominant portion of the Indian army was Muslim. It was given particular cause to dislike its task: “The Turks set in their front line Mullahs whose voice rang out across the narrow No Man’s Land at Sannaiyat, and elsewhere, reproaching the Mohammedans opposite....

7. Reported by one of those delegates, in a personal interview with the present writer, March 1941.

Desertions were frequent, so were executions.”⁸

Meanwhile, middle-class excitement also had been growing, though without action; there was an increasingly tense atmosphere of waiting. After two years of war, the Home Rule League was founded and proved exceedingly attractive. Talk of Indian independence increased. Even the Muslim League had found its restrained membership now including progressive bourgeois who thought favourably of a self-governing (though very loyal) India within the Empire; and the most conservative sections had resigned in alarm. In 1916 the Muslim League joined with the Congress in a joint declaration for self-government including a communal constitutional agreement between the two bodies. In 1917 Whitehall announced a policy of gradual self-government. Throughout 1917 and 1918 the tension grew, and with it the vibrant expectation that the end of the war would bring freedom.

Instead, it brought the Rowlatt Bills—an explicit programme for suppressing the people. M.K. Gandhi began organising Indian resentment to these, with the new non-violent technique of *satyagraha*. This culminated in the exuberant Satyagraha Day, 6 April 1919; and throughout that spring Muslims and Hindus were at a high pitch of excitement, and fraternised marvellously—accepting drinks of water from each other, and rejoicing together in their new-found dignity and gladness and the sense of being suddenly freed from the deadening burden of British oppression.

Gradually attention was diverted to galling realities as the government began to fire on Indians and to chastise them not with whips but with scorpions. Then came the horror of imperialist brutality at Amritsar and throughout the Punjab. Knowledge of it was suppressed at first, then was incredible and stupefying; finally it roused the country to a bitter determination, and changed Indian excitement to fury.

Virtually all sections of the people shared in this; though different sections gave different reasons for doing so. Of the vocal Muslims, many still kept their attention fixed on the Near East, and expressed their resentment as opposition to the British share

in the collapse of imperialist Turkey and the encroachments on its *khilāfah* ("Caliphate"). All-India Khilāfat Conferences were organised, became widespread, attracted much attention and excitement, and helped to incite Muslims' emotions on this issue. When Muḥammad 'Alī and his brother Shawkat 'Alī were released after four years of internment and imprisonment, at the end of 1919, they plunged at once into the organising and propaganda; and they were recognised as the leaders. During their confinement term, their fame had been kept fresh, through many protest meetings over India about their internment without trial, and also through the incident of the government's conditional offer of their release in 1917; they had been asked to sign an undertaking that they would, if released, do nothing helpful to the king-emperor's enemies, or attacking his friends. They were not freed when they signed not that undertaking but another to the same effect but adding the qualification: "without prejudice to our allegiance to Islam."⁹ The organising ability of these men, particularly that of Muḥammad 'Alī, was marked. Before long the Khilāfat Committee was a powerful and very representative body. It was also a decidedly aggressive body. The Muslims who supported it were vigorous and determined, enthusiastic about the struggle.

The theological weight of Indian Islam was fully behind the anti-British movement. The leaders of the theologians and divines consulted with the Khilāfat leaders, and the rank and file clerics throughout the country provided an important propaganda force. The *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā' i Hind* (the Indian Association of Muslim Clergy), a political body, was founded and highly organised.

In January 1920 the 'Alī brothers issued the Khilāfat Manifesto. Presently, in accordance with it, Muḥammad 'Alī and other leaders went off to Europe to present the Khilāfat case. While these were away, the Committee came more and more under the influence of Gandhi and the nationalists. Abul Kalām Āzād was released from internment in 1920, and at once vigo-

⁹ The required undertaking and the statement that they did sign may be found in *Eminent Mussalmans*, pp. 523 f.

rously gave himself and his very remarkable ability to the Khilāfat and nationalist cause. In May, the All-India Khilāfat Committee, meeting in Bombay, adopted Gandhi's Non-Co-operation programme. (This was several months before the Congress did likewise.) The following month a conference of Hindu and Muslim leaders met at Allahabad, and jointly approved that programme. The country was becoming exceedingly wrought up, and was preparing to fight.

The humiliating treaty of Sevres between the Allies and Ottoman Turkey was signed on 10 August 1920 ; it was nicely suited to inflame beyond measure the Indian Muslims. In September the Congress met in special session at Calcutta, and adopted the Non-Co-operation plan as a means to attain the two objectives which it now set before itself : *Swarāj* ("Self-Government") for India, and the Khilāfat demands. This meant that nationalism and Khilāfatism were now organically related, as the avowed twin objects of the entire country. Naturally, Muslims, especially educated Muslims, thought in terms of the *khilāfat* more than did Hindus.

We have indicated that the Muslim League also joined, however timidly, in the national movement. For some years it had been holding its annual sessions at the same time and place as the Congress, showing the mutual sympathy. It continued this practice for a while even when the Congress began to leave its gentlemanly and English-speaking nationalism for something more virile and lower-middle-class, as it did in 1919 and 1920. In the latter year, Shawkat 'Alī persuaded the League Council to adopt the Non-Co-operation programme. The right wing of both Congress and League had been enticed away by the Montford Reforms offering generous rewards to those willing to co-operate with imperialism ; the remainder was willing to be won over to progress. However, the Khilāfat Committee continued to represent many more Muslims than the League, and to do so more ably and more staunchly. The Khilāfat movement was, in fact, more radical and more aggressive than the Congress.

Muḥammad 'Alī and his deputation returned to India in

October 1920. In England they had achieved nothing: conservatives, of course, paid no attention to Indian deputations asking for "justice"; while more progressive folk felt little sympathy for pleas to help reimpose Turkish imperialism on subject peoples who had just finished fighting to throw off that imperialism and to free themselves. Besides, the hatred and contempt for Turkey, in which the British people had been long nurtured, were strong. So were the hatred and contempt for the war and all its implications; the British populace wished to forget it. The result of the mission's failure was to turn the Indian Khilāfatists more to national questions; Muḥammad 'Alī on landing in Bombay urged Muslims to join with Hindus in freeing India, for without that no Khilāfat freedom was possible.

He found that in India the Khilāfat and Swaraj movements were developing strongly, side by side or interpenetrating: and were assuming prodigious proportions, though adhering strictly to Gandhi's non-violent technique. At Erode, where he was presiding over a Khilāfat Conference, Muḥammad 'Alī delivered a fiery speech (nationalist rather than Khilāfatist) which, it was claimed, was an incitement to violence; however, an apology, and an assurance that violence in every form would be carefully avoided, led the government to withdraw the prosecution.

Meanwhile, he had become principal of the new nationalist college, the Jāmi'ah Millīyah Islāmīyah, when staff and students had withdrawn from Aligarh.

He, his brother Shawkat, and *mahatma* Gandhi were the country's most conspicuous leaders during the ensuing hectic days. Throughout 1921 India was seething with exuberant fervour. The country was virtually intoxicated with its new dreams, its new pride and dignity, its unity, determination, and strength. The government was frightened, and brutal, and ever on the alert for the first signs of violence or mass attacks. Autocrat, it did not understand these new hopes and feelings that surged among its subjects. Military through and through, it did not understand the non-violence, which it distrusted and supposed a ruse meant to put it off its guard. Few of the people of India, Muslim or other, had a clear picture of what they were

fighting for ; few knew what they expected to happen in the country when British imperialism—which is what they clearly knew that they were fighting against—disappeared. For the moment, they were content to struggle ahead, rejoicing in their ideologies.

It was a magnificent struggle.

The integral and enthusiastic part played in the movement by the Muslim theologians helped to keep the religious aspect emphasised. It was not only the Khilāfat question that was approached in religious terms ; the demand for national independence too was voiced with an Islamic appeal. Abul Kalām Āzād said in his statement on being rearrested : "The tenets of Islam are preserved in its scriptures. These, under no circumstances, make it permissible for Muslims to enjoy life at the expense of liberty. A true Muslim has either to immolate himself or retain his liberty ; no other course is open for him under his religion. To-day the Muslims have come to a firm decision that in freeing their country from its slavery they will take their fullest share along with their Hindu, Sikh, Parsi and Christian brethren. Continuously in the last twelve years I have been training my community and my country in demanding their rights and their liberty. . . . I have consecrated my whole being to it and . . . have never desisted from pushing on my work and inviting people to this national goal. This is the mission of my life, and if I live at all I elect to live only for this single purpose. Even as the Qurān says, 'My prayers and my observances and my life and my death are all for my Lord the God of the Universe.' "10

Many bourgeois Muslims who had drifted into a worldly secularism were drawn back by the enthusiasms of these years into a religious loyalty. Outsiders observed that beards were being grown again by the Westernised; but there was a good deal more to the trend than that. Latent appreciations of religious attitudes were resuscitated, and Islamic emotions, long dormant, once more became powerful. The secular middle-class men were returning to religion not out of hypocrisy ; their type, in whatever country and of whatever creed, has never, as a rule,

repudiated religion outright ; religion as they know it has simply become less and less relevant to their lives. In a crisis, in a situation such as the one that we are considering, religion is decidedly relevant once more to what they are doing : they return to religion, or it might be said that religion returns to them.

The leader himself, Muḥammad 'Alī, for the first time in his life read through the Qur'ān in a language that he understood and "discovered Islam".¹¹

The peasantry was in an utterly different environment. Islam was relevant enough to its life ; but that marked nothing new. The Khilāfat, on the other hand, was certainly not relevant. The Turkish *khilāfah* made no difference to it, in practice ; nor were there in India even any traditions of a time when it had. Nor even ideally were the ignorant villagers, in their abject and grinding poverty, in a position to grasp the notion of a distant Sulṭān-Khalīfah ; their mental horizon was not wide enough. "The word 'Khilāfat' bore a strange meaning in most of the rural areas. People thought it came from *khilaf*, an Urdu word meaning 'against' or 'opposed to,' and so they took it to mean : opposed to Government !" ¹² They were conscious of Islam, as usual ; but they were hardly conscious of Muḥammad VI and the Sublime Porte.

Two episodes worth mention developed out of the main Khilāfat excitement, as it affected the peasant. One was in the summer of 1920 : the curious "Exodus" (*hijrah*). The idea got about that Muslims might escape the rule, not only oppressive but infidel, of the "satanic" and hated British government by emigrating to the neighbouring Muslim kingdom of Afghanistan. This suggestion was taken up by some agitators and some local clerics, and it appealed to the poverty-stricken peasantry in a few sections, particularly in parts of Sind and the North-West Frontier Province. They were told, or they told each other, that the Afghan ruler was waiting to welcome them, with fertile lands. Crowds went forth to trek northwards. The number for

11. Mohamed Ali (ed. Afzal Iqbal), *My Life : A Fragment*, Chapter IV.

12. Nehru, *Autobiography*, p. 69.

August is officially calculated at 18,000¹³; the total is "estimated between 500,000 and 2,000,000"¹⁴ by various observers. Those who managed to reach the Afghan frontier were turned back from that unproductive country by its officials. Bitterly disappointed, they started homewards, drooping. Deprived of their sustaining, almost paradisaic, hope, many were unable to survive the horrible conditions: both they and those who did survive were robbed, starved, and smitten by the heat.

(It is interesting to note that a few of those who joined in this Emigration, instead of turning home, pushed on to the U.S.S.R. and earned there of efforts towards building a better world. Returning subsequently to India, they have provided several of the best workers in the socialist movement.)

The other incident was the chiliastic Moplah (*Māplā*) uprising, during the latter half of 1921. The Moplahs are a group of unusually poor peasants along the Malabar coast of south India, numbering about a million in all, and distinguished from their neighbours by their low economic level, and by being Muslims. They have often risen in the past in small outbreaks of particular ferociousness and bravery, protesting against their exploitation and their misery. The first serious outbreak in modern times was in 1873, since when the government has kept troops in the district; the next was in 1885, rewarded with the stationing among them ever since of a special police force. There were other serious revolts in 1894 and 1896.¹⁵

Early in 1921 the agitation for the Non-Co-operation and Khilāfat movements reached them. The government suppressed this, prohibiting public meetings and the like; but propaganda went on in secret. Presently the peasants were thoroughly aroused, and in a fervour of apocalyptic vision they gathered themselves together and undertook to set up a Khilāfat kingdom of

13. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs*, 1925, vol I, p 555, quoting government documents: *Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India*, 1920 (no. 56), pp. 52 f.

14. Briggs, "The Indian Hijrat of 1920," *Muslim World*, vol XX, no. 2 (April 1920), p. 165

15. This information is from Smith, *Nationalism and Reform in India*, pp. 314 ff.

their own, in which they should at last be free. They attacked the police and the military who were there to keep them oppressed, they attacked their landlords and money-lenders, they attacked everyone in sight. For a short time they were in fiery possession of a considerable area. Shops, temples, women, were desecrated, men were killed. The Moplahs were bitter : bitterly anti-Hindu, bitterly anti-British, bitter against the world that gave them only misery. Their ardour was the ardour of an oppressed class rising against its enemies, the ardour of religious fanaticism destroying sin and establishing a kingdom of good.

Naturally, before long the imperial government crushed the uprising utterly, and to-day the Moplahs are once more back in their old condition.

The Hijrah and Moplah affairs, however, were but isolated incidents springing from the nationalist-Khilāfat movement. In general that movement proceeded, at a high level of intensity, along surprisingly non-violent and well-organised lines, and keeping with remarkable determination towards the one objective of paralysing and thus overthrowing the British domination of India. Towards the latter part of 1921 Abul Kalām Āzād, the 'Alī brothers, and many other leaders were arrested. The speeches for which they were convicted were repeated on hundreds of platforms all over India. The government was determined to crush the movement, the people of India were determined to suffer anything rather than to let their movement be crushed. Gladly they went to jail, proud not to submit. There was an orgy of arrests at the end of the year : it is estimated¹⁶ that during December and January 1921-2, 30,000 persons were imprisoned for their politics.

Then, in February 1922, Gandhi called off the whole movement.

The fact that the movement stopped when he did so, rather than continuing on its own initiative, is some comment on its character. The more radical middle-class leaders were in jail and the lower classes did not produce leaders of their own to con-

16. Nehru, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

tinue the struggle. Further, the fact that the government had then, and not before, begun its arrests and counterattack, implies that by the end of 1921 it felt that the movement was beginning to weaken.

Nevertheless, the sudden stopping came as a shock ; intense, devastating. "The Muslims reeled."¹⁷ The emotional frustration that ensued was morbid.

But the Muslims had still more cause to be emotionally frustrated. They had fought with the idea of protecting the empire and authority of the Sulṭān-Khalīfah, of defending the Ottoman empire against Britain. Already the people of most of that empire had risen and overthrown the Sulṭān's hold over them. The Indian Khilāfatists did not heed this fact over much ; their plan was, vaguely, to have that hold re-enforced. But they could hardly disregard the next development : in November 1922 the people of the remaining, Turkish, part of the old Ottoman empire also rose, under their new leader Muṣṭafā Kamāl, and deposed Muḥammad VI as Sulṭān and Khalīfah, putting his cousin 'Abd al-Majīd in his place as Khalīfah only, without temporal power.

The Khilāfatists had previously demanded that the Khalīfah retain sovereignty over the whole of Arabia, Syria, and Iraq and that his dominions be no less than they had been at the outbreak of the Great War ; on the grounds that in Islam the distinction between spiritual and temporal is non-existent, and that his temporal power after the Balkan War was already " 'about the minimum with which a Caliph' could 'maintain his dignity and act effectively,' " ¹⁸ and that the granting of these demands was essential to the eternal salvation of any Muslim who accepted the settlement. At Christmas time 1922 the All-India Khilāfat Conference and the theologues' group, *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā'-i-Hind* held a joint session in Gaya along with the Congress ; and they could but declare their confidence in the new popular government

17. Chawdhri Khaliq al-Zamān, Lucknow, to the present writer ; March 1941. The non-industrialist Hindus also reeled ; compare above, pp. 204 f.

18. This quotation, and the rest of the Khilāfat Delegation demands, are found in Toynbee, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 49.

of Turkey, and approve its election of 'Abd al-Majīd in place of his cousin Muḥammad VI. No mention was made of the new Khalīfah's having been given spiritual but not temporal power. There was a hint of it, perhaps, in the pious request that Turkey maintain the *khilāfah* ("Caliphate") in accordance with the Canon Law and in consultation with the whole Islamic world.¹⁹ But no one with intelligence really expected them to do it.

The majority of educated Indian Muslims was soon paying little attention to the Indian Khilāfat organisation ; for it was becoming fairly clear that nothing that that organisation did was likely to have much relevance or effect. The struggle was over, their enthusiasm was a spent force. Disillusioned, they turned their energies elsewhere.

During the summer of 1923 several of the Muslim leaders were finally released from jail by the government. Muḥammad 'Alī, nationalist still, said that he came out "from a smaller prison to a larger one"²⁰ and that every executive member of the Congress ought to sign a pledge of readiness to sacrifice life itself for Indian independence. But at the ensuing Delhi session of the Congress, he appeared as the bulwark of the moderate group. The struggle was one between those in favour of continuing the policy of uncompromising resistance to the British, and those in favour of adapting policy to the new circumstances and entering the government's Legislative Councils ; and Muḥammad 'Alī won the day for the latter group, partly by announcing that he had received a telegram from Gandhi (who was in jail) in their favour. This telegram was the fictitious product of his lively imagination. At the next Congress (at Cacanada a few months later, at the close of 1923), of which he was the president, he was noticeably less anti-British, talking of "Swaraj within the Empire" and so on. That winter, the 'Alī brothers and Gandhi came in conflict for the first time, on a communal issue over a riot in Kohat.

Meanwhile all the Muslim political leaders were becoming less representative, because the political enthusiasm and interest

19. *ibid.*, p. 54.

20. *Eminent Mussalmans*, p. 540.

of middle-class Muslims was waning. Communal tension came to the fore, but the leaders had no solution for it. Among the religious and political leaders, a split developed, with two parties emerging and going divergent ways: an Indian-nationalist group, that stayed with the Congress; and a Khilāfatist group, that mostly slept. The former included many of the best leaders of the now defunct nationalist-Khilāfat movement: Dr Anṣārī, Abul Kalām Āzād, Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān, Khalīq al-Zamān, Taṣadduq Aḥmad Khān Shīrwānī, etc. The theologues' party sided with this Indian-nationalist trend. We shall have more to say of all these in a later connection. The persistently Khilāfat group, in which only the 'Alī brothers were outstanding, now had little function to perform: it was kept going more by momentum than by continued public enthusiasm. Most of the energy engendered by the previous struggle had subsided; of what remained, a good deal was turning to Congress nationalism, and only a little to pursuing Khilāfat questions.

The All-India Khilāfat Conference had met along with the Congress at Cocanada, December 1923; and had there resolved to send to Turkey a Khilāfat delegation, to remonstrate with Muṣṭafā Kamāl and to urge the viewpoint of "the Indian Muslims". Of the various delegates chosen, only a few were given passports by the government. Kamāl was irate to see men like Amīr 'Alī and His Highness the Āghā Khān approaching him on the subject of the Turkish and the Islamic constitutions: he pointed out with some scorn their intimate and friendly relations with British imperialism, even during the recent war against the Ottoman empire, and their heresy. It really was rather ludicrous to have a Shī'ī (outside Islamic political orthodoxy) and a Khojah (religiously ultra-heretical) telling the Turkish Muslims how to behave. It was also fanciful for men who were pillars of British rule in India to advise Turkish nationalism on policy. On 3 March 1924, the people of Turkey exiled 'Abd al-Majīd and abolished the *khilāfah* altogether.

The Indian Khilāfat Committee, which still administered considerable funds, continued to function; but it was hard pressed to find anything to do. It interested itself in Ibn Su'ūd's

campaign in Arabia. It declined an invitation to the Cairo *khilāfah* Conference, 1926. For the next year or two little happened. Then in 1928 the 'Alī brothers suddenly leapt into prominence again by launching a virulent campaign against the Nehru Report, on Muslim communal grounds. Communalism had a particularly good chance to flourish on this issue, because the Report was concerned with a constitution essentially moderate, involving no fundamental change in the structure of the state. There were, however, other Muslim communal organisations in India to attend to domestic "Muslim" politics. The following year we find Muḥammad 'Alī communally leading first an agitation, and then a deputation to the Viceroy, seeking to exempt Muslims from the workings of the Sarda Act prohibiting child marriage; he was willing to see social progress in the country, so long as the Muslims did not have to take any part in it.

By this time events in Palestine were providing something new to which the Khilāfat Committee could turn its attention. It supported the Arabs against the Jews during 1929-30 over the Wailing Wall Commission affair. When Muḥammad 'Alī died he was buried (January 1931) in Jerusalem. The Committee had a considerable share in organising the Islamic Congress held at Jerusalem in December of that year ; but Shawkat 'Alī was disappointed at how Arab, rather than Islamic, it turned out to be.

One did not have to be very astute to realise by now that the Khilāfat affair as an Indian political issue had petered out.

It had petered out because it was a wrong ideology, romantic and out of touch with actualities. Anyone who was at all alert must have recognised its falsehood by 1924 at the very latest. The Khilāfatist Indians were in fact struggling for something ; yet they thought that they were struggling for something else, for the Turkish *khilāfah* about which they really knew little. The trouble with a wrong ideology is that it is inefficient. While the Indian Khilāfatists were putting forth a mighty and sacrificial effort, presumably to help Turkey and an old world order in which they had once participated, that order was unreal ; and Turkey itself was struggling, successfully, and in an

entirely different direction. It was a painful process for the Indian Muslims to 'adjust their minds to the concrete facts of the situation, as they gradually became revealed. It is always a painful process to give up dreams and to look reality in the face.

the Pathans could be equally straightforward and single, God would bless their efforts to win the country back. There has been also a drive to get rid of religious accretions, to relive a crystal-pure Islam. The leaders have been affected somewhat by Islamic reforms in India ; and they have quoted Iqbāl's progressive writings, while deploring his politics. In general their Islam has been of a progressive liberal type. But its form was derived less from outside influences than from the actual needs of the situation.

The Khudā'ī Khidmatgārs have exhibited the spectacle of a surging and powerful and religiously-motivated united struggle for freedom. The spirit of a people has been kindled in the presence of opportunity blocked by fierce oppression, has been fanned by moral fervour and Islamic traditions of justice and virility, and has burned steadily and brightly. To the old order it has burned menacingly, its flames threatening destruction ; to to-morrow's world it has burned as a symbol of hope.

The movement has employed what is euphemistically termed a uniform, the red shirt ; in practice it has been any garment, ranging in colour from a dirty yellow to a dirty brown, that the villagers could muster, to give a semblance of co-ordination. From this, the movement has been nicknamed "The Red Shirts" —a fact exploited by interested parties to conjure up the notion that it is a Communist organisation. This is quite silly. The group has virtually no thoroughgoing class basis. For long it had virtually no economic programme ; and this was a notable defect. Lately, it has spoken of a better distribution of land, and decried the large estates. Some of the younger leaders read Marx and Lenin, speak sympathetically of the U.S.S.R., and think socialism so obviously worth while that ruling groups will spontaneously introduce it when India is free of the British.¹³ Essentially the movement is one of nationalism and of social reform ; not of revolution. For instance, each member takes a pledge of non-violence ; and the argument for progress is moral rather than economic. But the argument is there ; and it is powerful.

Many clerics have been with the movement. On the whole,

13. For instance, see Yunus, *Frontier Speaks*, pp. 71, 158, 213 f.

turn to various groups Indian-nationalist but specifically Muslim. We have already examined the Khilāfat movement and its satellites.

Muslims and the Indian National Congress

In a study such as the present one there is no scope for entering at length into the relations between Indian Muslims and the Indian National Congress. To discuss the part played by the Congress in the lives of Muslims, and the part played by Muslims in the Congress, would be a vast task, and would lead us far astray. Besides, it would involve an unreal approach, for Muslims joined or supported or directed the Congress in some instances as a distinct Muslim group within a larger organisation, but often as individuals, integral parts of the whole. The history of most Muslims in the Congress is simply the history of the Congress ; Muslim individuals and Sikh individuals and several thousands of other individuals joined together and together have formed a national organisation. To attempt a comprehensive treatment of the role of Muslims in the Congress would be comparable to attempting to study the role of blond-haired people in the British Labour Party. The absence of such treatises does not mean that there are no blonds in the Labour Party, or that they are unimportant.

The Congress has been by far the largest, most important, and most representative political organisation in India. Various interested and influential parties (such as the India Office¹ and the censored press) carried on propaganda to the effect that it represented Hindus but not Muslims. This was for a time simply untrue. It was particularly untrue in crises.

There has always been a number of Muslims in the Congress or supporting it. They have been nationalist and they have been Muslim. Some of them have been nationalist because they were Muslim : they deduced their Indian nationalist ardour from their interpretation of Islam—for instance, of Islam as a religion of freedom and equality, of justice, of co-operation with and respect for all mankind. Others have been Indian-nationalist in spite

1. For example, the Secretary of State, Mr. Amery, in the House of Commons, 15 August 1940 "... the main body of the Hindu community which is represented by the Congress . . ."; and constantly.

of being Muslim : they have heard Muslim League propaganda and despised its communalism, and have determined that they themselves at least would choose Indian freedom and world progress rather than Islamic reaction. Others again have been Indian-nationalist and have been Muslim, but have not taken time off to work out some relation between the two facts. They have supported the Congress not as Muslims but simply because it seemed to them the right or the obvious thing to do. This need not mean that they were not Muslims also, even ardently so. Finally, certain Muslims have noticed that some Muslims were in the Congress, some were not ; some Hindus were in the Congress, some were not (it is worth remembering that there have always been Hindu reactionaries, landlords, etc., who have hated the Congress and Indian independence as wholeheartedly as their more advertised Muslim parallels), some Sikhs were in it and some were not . . . and so on. They have inferred that to postulate any relation between religion and politics is misleading.

Attempts to break up the national solidarity and to foster communalism for a long time succeeded decisively in the cities at most. At the outbreak of the Second World War, even when bourgeois Muslim Congressmen tended to be consciously a Muslim set within the Congress, yet villagers who were nationalists continued to be nationalists solidly, not in groups.

From among the first division, the communally-conscious Muslim nationalists, supporting the Congress as Muslims and, on behalf of Indian nationalism and the Congress, appealing to Muslims as a group, we may take as representative almost the entire corps of the orthodox divines (for instance, Husayn Aḥmad Madanī, principal of the country's chief Islamic theological college at Deoband), and such a firebrand agitator as 'Ubayd Allāh Sindhī. The clerics, whose importance in the villages has been large, we shall study separately later. 'Ubayd Allāh Sindhī (also a theologian by training) is a romantic figure whose devotion to Islam has been unswerving, as also his opposition to imperialism and his hopes of a free and better society in India and in the Islamic world. During and after the Khilāfat and Non-Co-operation days he was prodigiously active among the

Muslims of the northern frontier of India and beyond, inflaming them to opposition and stirring their passions and hopes. He was the kind of successful and elusive agitator whom the government of India thoroughly dislikes, and he had to live in exile from that time (c. 1924) until 1939 ; he spent the long interlude in various parts of the U.S.S.R., at Geneva, and in Arabia. He was eventually allowed to return to India, presumably being considered more or less ineffectual ; he died in 1944.

He had a special Muslim social theory, which he derived from Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi (eighteenth century). Anti-capitalist, it envisaged Islam as an unfinished social movement, begun by Muḥammad and having shown tremendous promise for a few years, but then perverted by Arab imperialism, so that that promise is still to be fulfilled. The theory sounds progressive, but it is not really radical ; socially, ‘Ubayd Allāh was not very dangerous to the powers that be. But he gave himself to political propaganda also. Touring south India in 1941, he applauded the Hindu-Muslim unity that he found there, and said : “I therefore urge on my Moslem brethren to join the Congress without any hesitation whatsoever and work there as a group in co-operation with others for the uplift of the community. I would urge upon Muslims with all the strength at my command not to be alarmed by those who constantly tell them that they are in minority. If the Moslems take their proper place in the vanguard of nationalistic forces and work for the freedom of the country there will be no question of majority or minority. Their heroic work and organising capacity will be amply rewarded.”²

In addition to such communal leaders, there have been many Muslim nationalists who were recognised as outstanding and sincere Islamic leaders, but whose appeal has been not only to Muslims but to the whole of India. Such have been several of the country’s most prominent Congressmen : Ḥakīm Ajmal Khān, Dr Sayf al-Dīn Kichlū, Dr M. A. Anṣārī, and many another. All Indian nationalists, of whatever creed, respected and admired these men, and took them as their own

2. In a press interview given at Kumbakonam, 11 June 1941, as reported in *The Tribune*, Lahore, 14 June 1941.

leaders. (They had their lesser counterparts in each province and each district.) We shall take as a worthy example the present (1940 ff.) president of the Congress, to whom we have already had occasion to refer : Mawlānā Abul Kalām Āzād.

Abul Kalām was born in Makkah (Mecca) in 1888, of an Indian father who had left India at the Mutiny. The father, too, was a distinguished Islamic leader in both India and the Near East, a religious scholar and author. The son was educated in Makkah and at al-Azhar, the orthodox Islamic seminary in Cairo ; he was a brilliant student. He acquired a thorough grasp of Persian as well as Arabic, and of the traditional Muslim studies. After his father died, he came home to India ; and he set himself to absorbing also the new learning of the West. On his own initiative he learned to read various European languages ; he still does not speak English, though he understands it when it is spoken. As a result of his by-no-means superficial studies in Western science and literature, and of the movements stirring in India about him at that time, he decided to work for the reform of Islam. He had great respect for the Islamic reformer Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. We have already noticed his successful journalism in 1912 and the following years, and his relentless and valuable work in the Khilāfat and Non-Co-operation movements during the interlude between his imprisonments. When released again two years later, he was at once elected president of the Congress (Delhi, 1923)—no one else, either before or since, has had the honour of that presidency at so early an age. Ever since that time he has held some important executive positions in the Congress, and in 1940 was elected president for the second time.

He has not surrendered his scholarship during his political career ; for instance, his much applauded Urdu annotated translation of the Qur'ān was produced in the 'twenties. He is an unusually well read man, of extensive interests ; his private library is said to be among the best in India. He is a profound scholar of religion, discussing religious subjects dispassionately, historically. He is a scintillating conversationalist. Once, early in his career, the Shaykh al-Hind, Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan, then principal

of the Deoband Seminary, astonished Muslim India by giving to him still a more universal Islamic position as a religious authority.

He became later universally respected and liked. He is a powerful and effective orator.

Even his political opponents—for instance, the Lahore daily *Inqilāb*—when they have attacked him, have had to begin by praising him as a revered scholar and a great Muslim; then they go on to call him “misled”. Jinnah, who has no understanding of these things, made a political blunder of the first water when he referred to him slightlying as “the playboy of the Congress”.

He is not essentially a politician; he has repeatedly refused political office, and prefers the study (or the committee room) to the public square. His excellent mind is at its best in a committee. It is there that he is warmly appreciated, by Hindus, Muslims, everyone; the Congress executive owes much to him during the past twenty years, and cordially admits it, quite uncommunally.

He is not a scientific socialist; but claims to be a humanitarian one. And he is a sober but unflinching Indian nationalist. In his presidential address at Ramgarh, 1940, he aligned himself with the “new ideological phase”³ of the Congress begun at Lucknow, 1936, by Jawahar Lal Nehru; that is, the international, anti-fascist, phase. “He is the most radical among the old guard of politicians.”⁴ It is understood that he and Jawahar Lal were the two members of the Congress Working Committee who opposed in 1940 the mildness of Gandhi’s programme of individual civil disobedience. Āzād is a militant who had never allowed himself to be diverted from nationalist aims by mystic pacifism or by mill-owners.

A third type among the Muslims in the Congress has been the man who may or may not be a good Muslim, but in any case does not think that the question of whether one is a Muslim or not is relevant to one’s choice of political activity. Such were the Muslim lawyers and other professionals who joined the Congress in its first few years; for example, Hon. Mr Tayyibji.⁵

3. From one of the extracts of the speech given in Desai, op. cit., p. 156.

4. Menerally, *Leaders of India*, p. 8.

5 See above, p. 25, at references 27 and 28.

Such has been Yūsuf Mihr 'Alī, a prominent Congress Socialist. These people have not approached the issues religiously at all. There have been many humbler folk throughout the country of a similar attitude.

A fourth type of "Muslim" Indian nationalist has been Muslim only by extraction, Muslim in the communal sense ; but in fact has been anti-religious. There were numerous "Muslims" among the Indian communists, long before the Communist Party was supporting the League but was rather attacking it and communalism in general, and religion, caustically. A number of young Muslim intellectuals and students were not seduced by the communalists but turned rather to Marxist thinking, or in any case attacked religion as retrogressive and divisive and would have none of it. They have worked closely with non-"Muslim" progressives for a united and free and secular India.

It is clearly impossible to calculate the numerical proportions of the different sorts of Muslim nationalist. Such a calculation would necessitate something like the Gallup poll. But in general one might hazard that the last group, deliberately anti-religious, has been much the smallest, and is decreasing; and that the first, of communally-minded Muslim Indian-nationalists, during the 1930's was drifting rather to separate Muslim communal nationalist organisations in alliance with the Congress. During the 1940's, as we have said, specifically Muslim Indian-nationalism has tended to disappear altogether.

If we turn to a few remarks about those Congressmen whose Indian nationalism has been explicitly Muslim, it is only because they are more accessible to study. Congressmen who were individually Muslim but whose nationalism was avowedly Indian are certainly no less important, but they do not form a distinct and assessable group. It is necessary, therefore, to remember that throughout all superficial communal changes, there remained an underlying and formidable company of "Muslims" as of others whose support of the Congress had nothing to do one way or another with their religion.

We have already, in various connections, touched upon the highlights of Congress-Muslim history until the *khilāfat*

collapse in 1924; and have pointed out how at that time the nationalist ardour of most Muslims who had any left, including the former Khilāfatists, was absorbed into the Congress. (There were five Muslim presidents of the Congress in the decade following the First World War.)

Some of the middle-class Muslim leaders there came to be designated later as the Nationalist Muslims, even as the Nationalist Muslim Party. They were the most representative Muslim leaders in the country, commanding a good deal more support in the Muslim community than any other group. But the country was not yet sufficiently communalist in politics for them to be accurately called a "party" within the Congress during the later 'twenties. Moreover, politics was at a low ebb generally: the frustration following the failure of the anti-British struggle persisted still; communalism of the tumultuous, rioting, sort was widespread; some leaders were still not sure but that the Legislative Councils offered some possibility of progress; and so on.

The communalist attitude was meanwhile growing among the middle classes, and increasingly entering petty politics. In 1928 the "Nehru Report" provided an occasion for it to flare up, on the constitutional issue; whereupon the previous Muslim divergence between the nationalists and the communalists became a conflict. But this was suspended in 1930, for then arose a really major political contest and the Civil Disobedience movement. It is clear that however much even middle-class Muslims might bicker and chide the Congress during periods of inactivity, yet, before the Second World War, when the Congress led a struggle for national independence the Muslims supported it, in large numbers. During the Civil Disobedience movement millions of Indians struggled together, once more trying desperately and doggedly to win the independence of their country; a hundred thousand and more were imprisoned. The individuals taking part, as leaders, followers, jail-goers, were of all sorts: Muslims, Hindus, atheists, Christians, and the rest. The people of India pitted their strength against the imperialist rule. With sacrifice, with determination, with joy, they faced the hated foreigner and strove with might and main to win their nation's freedom. The

rulers were severe, and cunning ; they were powerful, and as grimly resolute as the Indians themselves. For months the movement surged; the spirit of the people was kindled, and it burned a brilliant flame. In the end, the imperialists won : they had beaten the country down, and with trenchant cleverness had outmanoeuvred it. Indian nationalism was not quite strong enough to defeat the mightiest empire in the world.

After the struggle for independence seemed to be subsiding without achieving success, then it was that middle-class communalism was revived. All the leaders of the Congress are and always have been middle-class. The Nationalist Muslim leaders, in so far as they felt themselves communal representatives on the Congress leadership, reverted to a dissatisfaction with the lack of a communal agreement. In 1932 the British Communal Award was announced, and the Congress's inability to come to a decision about it distressed many of the Muslim leaders. Anṣārī, Khaliq al-Zamān, and others threatened to resign if the Congress fought the Award without first reaching an alternative agreement of its own of some sort. Meanwhile middle-class Muslim leaders and many of their followers were beginning to drift from the Congress into purely Muslim organisations that were politically and even socially progressive, but communal. For instance, from 1931 onwards several of the Congress's most able workers in the Punjab, who were Muslims, began to form or to join the new Ahrār party instead ; and in Bengal, the Krishak Prajā party.

That by 1937 the Congress leaders to an appreciable extent were thinking in communal terms, and to a lesser extent so were their followers, is shown by the provincial election figures, as we have already considered. The Congress made only a feeble effort to win the Muslim communal vote ; instead it allied itself with Muslim communal organisations for the Muslim constituencies. In some cases, notably in the United Provinces, it afterwards found that it did not need these alliances, for the Congress itself won an overwhelming majority ; for this and other reasons, once in office, it neglected these communal Muslim "allies". In spite of all disruptive factors, however, the elections showed

quite clearly (to the horror of Whitehall, and of the Muslim landowners) that the Congress had more support among the Muslim electorate than had any other body.

That electorate did not include the basic lower classes : the proletariat and the poor peasantry. In general those classes have not been communally minded, and would give their allegiance to any party which approached them with a concrete programme of progressive action. Even the conservatives admitted that had those classes voted, the Congress majority would have been even more overwhelming. (It must be remembered that at that time the Congress had a progressive programme, very different from its later anaemic policy.)

The Congress's stand on the communal question was embodied in its demand that the constitution of a free India be reached in a Constituent Assembly elected by adult suffrage of the entire country ; that Assembly elaborating minority safeguards to be approved by the Muslim and other minority-group delegates in the Assembly, who will have been elected to it communally ; or, if agreement on these lines prove impossible in any instance, the question being arbitrated by a third party chosen with the consent of the delegates of the minority concerned.

For the last few years of the 1930's the Congress was losing a good deal of its Muslim middle-class following. This was due to a variety of causes: the continued growth of communalism as a mode of thinking and feeling; the propaganda and activities of the Muslim League (the League has been the beneficiary of most of the Congress's recent Muslim losses); and the Congress's own lack of a radically progressive programme. These three factors, interacting with each other, were in part symptoms of one fundamental tendency : the desperate and very powerful drive of the reactionary forces in India and Britain to obviate radical social change. The crisis came and was breaking up the previous united front of conservatives, liberals, and progressives that used to form Congress strength. Now, class alignments were becoming more clear and decisive.

In addition, the first two of the three factors, namely, the spread of communalism and the growth of the League, were als o

in part symptoms of another and quite different fundamental tendency : the development of the Muslim bourgeoisie to a point where it was a separate class entity evolving a separate constructive programme of its own, not attacking "nationalism" but rather offering Muslim nationalism as an alternative or supplement to Indian.

Of the three factors, here we are concerned only with the last. The Congress lost Muslim support, as it lost much other support, because it was not progressive enough.

The Congress programme reached its left-most point at the time of the 1937 elections ; immediately afterwards it began to swing back to the right. The history of the next five years was the story of the success of the conservatives, with their policy of blocking change. After making use of the progressives' surging movement, to win victory at the polls, they attacked and defeated that left-wing group, rejected their proposals, but failed to bring forward constructive proposals of their own. The price that they paid for this victory over radicalism was (apart from the growing frustration of the country) the loss to the Congress of its Muslim support. During this period 1937-41, and especially in its critical culminating years, the abject failure of Indian nationalism to provide an adequate leadership for the Muslims' and others' urge to advance, is an essential though often overlooked explanation of the success at that time of the Muslim League.

The first question put to the Congress after the elections in 1937 was whether it should accept office and form provincial ministries. The left wing, fearing compromise with imperialism, said "no"; the conservatives proved themselves stronger, hesitated, finally agreed to form governments in six, later seven, provinces. Something was, at first, achieved for the people by these ministries, in the way of civil liberties, peasant legislation, mild social reform. But the scope was severely limited; even had there been a will to radical change. Essentially, the constitution gave the provinces little power, and less money ; imperialism was in supreme control, and within that framework only the barest tinkering was possible. The ills of India are deep-rooted ; no

scratching at the surface will dislodge them. And the Congress right wing was both unable and afraid to dig deep. Consequently, they appeared to be themselves the agents of oppression. "The dominant moderate leadership in effective control of the Congress machinery and of the Ministries was in practice developing to increasing co-operation with imperialism, was acting more and more openly in the interests of the upper-class landlords and industrialists, and was showing an increasingly marked hostility to all militant expression and forms of mass struggle. As the practical experience of the Ministries developed, discontent grew."⁶ These are the words of a spokesman of a discontented group within the Congress itself ; small wonder, then, that the agitator rousing Muslim disaffection found a ready audience.

The fact, always true, was now becoming clearer that the Congress is *essentially* a bourgeois organisation. Virtually all its leaders have been middle-class. A goodly portion of its financial backing is provided by the big industrialists ; similarly, of its policy. When the Congress has advanced, when it has retreated (e.g. in 1922, in 1937), it is they who have profited. For some time the interests of almost all classes within India could be subsumed under the leadership, anti-imperialist, of the *haute bourgeoisie*. This became no longer true.

Thus, in 1939 for the first time the presidential election of the Congress was contested. Since the president nominates the Working Committee, his selection is significant. Previously there had been substantial agreement amongst the leaders, so that once a candidate had been decided upon by them he was accepted by the Congress at large. Not so at the Tripuri session : the choice of Gandhi and most of the previous executive was challenged by the progressive nationalists, socialists, and communists. The latter groups put their own candidate (Subhash Chandra Bose) with—what was significant in the struggle—a divergent policy. By a close majority, Bose was elected. But within a few months the conservatives had forced him to resign again ; more important, they had frustrated and would continue to frustrate the

policy of radicalism which he represented. For the following three years the Congress did nothing radical. One ominous result was that Bose, and many of the "socialists," eventually deserted the Congress and sided with the Japanese.⁷ It was during these same years that most politically-conscious Muslims deserted Indian nationalism and sided with the Muslim League.

The obstructionist policy of the conservatives culminated in the critical years 1940-1. The outbreak of the Second World War precipitated the nationalist issue; but again the Congress refused to take the lead. In 1939 India was autocratically involved in the distant war, without even the formality of consultation with its legislature; and the rule of law was replaced by rule by ordinance. The Congress protested, stating that the Indian people could fight the "war for freedom" only if that freedom would include also themselves; and demanded a statement of British war aims, especially as regards India. The viceroy pompously replied that British policy towards India in the future would be precisely what it had been for twenty years in the past.⁸ The Congress again protested and resigned provincial office, but did nothing further lest it "embarrass" the British in their war.

As long as the war seemed mainly an imperialist struggle, and as long as India itself was in no danger of attack, the Congress refused to launch a head-on anti-imperialist offensive; even though the anti-war feeling of the country was intense and the anti-British hatred almost unanimous. But the bourgeoisie was afraid of the masses; and while the Muslims' social reactionaries preached seductive and fanatical communalism, the Congress hardly preached anything at all. Gandhi said at the beginning of his "Individual Civil Disobedience" movement, 1940, for the attainment of free speech, that he did not know

7. For this reason, it may be just as well that this particular individual did not remain Congress president; though the Communists, who at that time supported him, have since the fall of Singapore proved themselves much the most anti-Japanese group in the country—much more vigorously so than the Congress at large.

8. For the viceroy's statement, see Sarkar, *Hindustan Year Book*, 1941, pp. 439 f.

what independence meant. He has expressed at various times the capitalist fear of a socialist revolution in the event of a successful nationalist one ; in October 1939 he said : "If to-day the British leave India, the Punjabees from the Punjab and Gurkhas from the East will destroy the country. If therefore there could be anyone desirous of maintaining the supremacy of the British in India, it can only be the Congress."⁹ He encouraged communalism, which was waxing in any case—he often referred to Hindus and Muslims as "we" and "you" respectively ; and he said that the Congress "is the only authoritative and representative body of Indian people and of those Hindus who are in spite of their majority weak."¹⁰ In fact, the Congress, it seemed, was joining in the general disruption of mass sentiment—so far was it from yielding to the pressure to lead a mass movement.

To crown all, Gandhi gave up all objectives except non-industrial clothmaking and the preaching of pacifism as an absolute. The bureaucracy was not much disturbed. However, it had no intention of granting pacifist freedom ; and the Congress's means of attaining it was "individual *satyagraha*"—a means which struck most Muslims, who are virile folk, as singularly fatuous. Mass civil disobedience they might reluctantly accept as a perhaps effective though anaemic policy ; individual civil disobedience, a mere symbol of the other, abandoned effectiveness altogether in favour of increased anaemia. Meanwhile, Gandhi was busy turning the Congress from a political organisation into a pacifist society. In 1941, various prominent Congressmen (of all communities) resigned, some in disgust, and some on Gandhi's advice because they were not absolute pacifists. The question presently arose whether anyone might remain in the organisation who accepted "non-violence" only as an expedient political technique, and not as an absolute morality for life. Since the number of Muslims who are absolute pacifists has been negligible, the question had considerable importance. Gandhi

9 Quoted, significantly enough (and with various embellishments), by Jinnah in his *Speech delivered . . . on the 19th of November 1940 in the Legislative Assembly*, p. 23.

10. Quoted by Jinnah, loc. cit.

answered it publicly by saying that while it was possible for "a person who resists by force a robber robbing his property or an assailant molesting his daughter"¹¹ to remain in the Congress, yet he *should* not do so, and that he, Gandhi, would unhesitatingly advise such a person to resign. It seemed almost that Muslims were not welcome in the Congress.

The next step of the Congress was to give up even its campaign for freedom of speech. The *satyagraha* movement was called off; in recognition, apparently, of its ridiculousness. The fact was that the social crisis of the late 'thirties, heightened by the imperialist war and finally made insistent by the Nazi-Japanese threat both to India and to world socialism, found the Congress, as it found many a middle class throughout the world, bankrupt of leadership.

It was during this period that the Congress lost the allegiance of most Muslims; for the very simple and very adequate reason that it was not offering them anything in which they were interested.

The situation subsequently changed. The entry of the U.S.S.R. into the war, and the upsurge of the people's movement throughout the world and not least in Britain, gave the masses of India something for which to hope (and for which to fight) from a victory of the Allies. On the other hand, the entry of Japan brought the menace of fascism to India's doorstep, and made vivid the horror that would be involved also for Indians in an Allied defeat. In this situation the Congress demanded a nationalist government to wage the war for India, and at last put a sting in its demand. Thereupon the imperialists locked up all Congress leaders in prison; and when mob fury resulted, they intensified their oppression of the country.

But by this time the Congress had (except in the North-West Frontier) lost effective Muslim support. For instance, few Muslims were amongst those who, spontaneously or in response to pro-Japanese organisations, struck out in fury at the government's new repressive attack. After this, Congress activities

11. Gandhi, in a press statement 5 August 1941, as reported in *The Statesmen*, North India edition, 7 August 1941.

have been regarded by most Muslims from the outside ; we will accordingly leave further consideration of them to a later chapter.

Pro-Nationalist Muslim Groups

Khudā'ī Khidmatgār. A nationalist and socially progressive religious movement has arisen among the people (called Pathans) of the North-West Frontier Province, which is particularly interesting because its background is similar in many ways to that of Islam when it first arose in Arabia. The social and economic conditions of the people in the two cases have much in common. The tribesmen of the frontier itself make almost a replica of Muḥammad's nomadic Arabia ; the men of the province proper are more settled, engaging in agriculture, but are still tribal. There are a few towns. The land is fairly unproductive, the tribal areas decidedly so : so that the competitive pressure on the land is great, the standard of living fairly low, and the class structure (there being little surplus wealth) not highly developed.

The leader and genius of the movement has been one Khān 'Abd al-Ghaffār Khān. He is a deeply religious man, inspired by a love and devotion for his people and a strong desire to help uplift them. He has been astute and penetrating ; many powerful interests have tried strenuously and subtly to mislead him, as well as to buy him off ; but he has usually seen clearly what was happening, and kept to his path. His movement was originally one of social uplift only ; but he was led by a diagnosis of the community's ills to politics, and to substantially correct politics. He has not been a tactical politician : he is utterly straightforward and uncrafty, nor is he much given to discussion at the council table ; but he has been a quiet, persevering worker, and has had an outstanding ability for organising.

As a youth he went out to the villages in social service. His family owned extensive land. He was involved in the disturbances of 1919 and the following few years, and was interned for a time. Afterwards he set himself to touring the Pathan villages, organising the people into a strong, disciplined, peaceful unit. The problems that he had to face were those of all tribal socio-

logies: disunity, inter-tribal destruction, bloodfeuds and revenge, superstitions, and so on. Pervading all was poverty and hardship. The time had come when the people could move on to a higher stage of life; but they could do so only if they would unite and march forward together, instead of fighting amongst themselves. Also, it was soon apparent, the government, as we shall see, stood in their way.

The people have united, under 'Abd al-Ghaffār, through the movement known as the Servants of God: *Khudā'ī Khidmatgār*. It is a religious movement, as is appropriate to cultural change at this stage of social development. It is a Pathan nationalist movement in the sense that the rise of Islam was an Arab nationalist movement. The leaders preach the religion of unity, of brotherhood, of the service of mankind. They strive to rid the community of the constant blood feuds and devastating vengeance: they urge the virtue of forgiveness, again and again. "He who forgives and is reconciled, his reward is with God" they cite from the Qur'ān.¹² When the tribesmen reply by quoting verses on retribution, it is explained that the *lex talionis* is a limit, not a duty. Instances of toleration and forgiveness in Islamic history are copiously given; for example, the Prophet's merciful conquest of Makkah is emphasised. Appeals to the lives of Muḥammad and his successors support, too, the teaching of service and of cohesive brotherhood.

Through the movement the Pathans have been learning to help each other, to see their problems and difficulties as common. They have been learning to organise, to discipline their irascible discontent and to direct it into proper, effective channels. During the Congress's "no-rent" campaign of 1930, the Khudā'ī Khidmatgārs staged a successful well-organised stoppage of revenue collecting. The discipline achieved by these people has been quite astonishing. They were ever turbulent, manly, independent folk, like the Arabs; famed for their snipers and their unrestrainable warring. The imperial government claims never to have been able to pacify them; and has used their contentiousness as one excuse for continuing its military rule in India.

12. Qur'ān, xlii. 39.

But in this new movement they have pacified themselves. (Despite that government's obstruction : the authorities make the movement illegal from time to time) During Civil Disobedience, the Khudā'ī Khidmatgārs put up a marvellous display of pertinacious non-violence. The weaning of the Pathans from sporadic and petty violence had been achieved. When they attended the Karachi Congress, in 1931, they were cheered for their endurance and bravery in the preceding year, by then famous throughout India. (Again in 1942, at the time of the much-misunderstood "Quit India" movement, the Khudā'ī Khidmatgārs strove mightily for freedom, with great bravery and unflinching non-violence even against the bureaucracy's fierce provocation. Theirs was the only province in India where the Congress was not immediately declared illegal after the "Quit India" resolution was passed—8 August 1942—and therefore the only one in which an official Congress movement had a chance to develop. Its non-violence, self-discipline, and vigour were remarkable.)

It had early become clear to 'Abd al-Ghaffār Kūn and some of the subordinate leaders that the Pathans' problem could be solved only with the help of the whole of India. A paramount task was to unite with the Hindus, and with everyone else who was willing, to free the country from foreign domination. The Khudā'ī Khidmatgārs wanted complete independence for India, nothing less. Theirs is essentially, and by origin, a Pathan national movement ; but it subsequently adhered to Indian nationalism as an integral part of the whole, without losing its distinctive individuality. After 1931 the organisation was put at the disposal of the Congress. Quotations from the Qur'ān against slavery have been rallying points for nationalist enthusiasm ; and the struggle to free the country from the serfdom of imperialism became the Holy War of these Servants of God. Not that the Pathan's love of independence needed much fanning. . . . But it needed direction, and it now had that, No section of India has been more thoroughly nationalist.

'Abd al-Ghaffār would tell these Muslims that God gave their country to England because Englishmen did not quarrel among themselves, did not rob each other, and so forth ; when

Chapter Three

ISLAM AND INDIAN NATIONALISM

For various reasons Indian nationalism, a bourgeois enthusiasm, had in its early phase adherents most of whom were not Muslims. We have noted this fact, especially in our discussion of communalism, and have considered some of the reasons. Indian nationalism in its most recent phase has again been able to command relatively little Muslim support. This fact we shall be noting more fully in our discussion of the Muslim League, and shall be endeavouring to understand some of its reason. Meanwhile our task here is to observe that between these two phases there was a period during which virtually the entire Indian people struggled together to throw off the British imperialist yoke. They struggled, with a middle-class leadership and a nationalist ideology ; and they came remarkably near to victory. But they did not quite attain it.

The rise of this all-India struggle may be dated from shortly before the First World War ; and its first culmination in a major crisis was the Khilāfat-and-Non-Co-operation movement. The struggle and the united nationalism continued more or less until, say, the 1937 provincial elections; having again reached a crisis, again not quite attained victory, in the Civil Disobedience movement after the World Economic Depression. Since about 1937 the movement has declined : the Empire having intensified its counterattack, with increasing skill, increasing power, increasing divisiveness ; and the Indian middle-class leadership having weakened its offensive, with increasing confusion and frustration, increasing fear of the masses, and increasing dividedness. The division has particularly taken the form of Hindu-Muslim separateness.

To study, then, united Indian nationalism between its rise and fall, in order to observe the Muslim part therein, we shall first briefly treat the Indian National Congress, and then shall

however, the priestly class is socially less advanced, and cannot be said to support it entirely.

The organisation has been confined to Pathans, and has had a membership of between 100,000 and 120,000. The movement has been weak in the towns, pervasive in the villages. It has included small landholders as well as the peasant proletariat. Each village is organised with a committee, of which the officers are appointed from above. In fact the whole hierarchy is appointed and dismissed by superiors, like an army; the supreme head is Khān 'Abd al-Ghaffār Khān. He moreover is the link with the Congress; the movement takes orders through him. No other member is allowed to hold any Congress office; nor to join any other organisation. A mild purge of officials took place in early 1941, in the best military tradition. Although the discipline that has been attained is rigid, it is largely self-imposed; and it is interesting to note that the member on joining swears to obey all "legitimate" instructions. Yet there has been practically no disaffection—the movement, sounding somewhat romantic, is in practice strict. The religious character of the organisation appears in that the supreme loyalty is to God and the service of mankind, not to the organisation itself. In this part of India the seclusion of women (*pardah*) is little known, outside the towns; and numerous Pathan women have taken their vigorous part in the "Red Shirt" army.

There are some Hindus in the movement; but the percentage of Pathans who are not Muslims is almost negligible, and the same is consequently true of the Khudā'ī Khidmatgārs. A few Hindus are even officers in some of the towns, but the towns are unimportant. The Hindu members complain that the movement is too Islamic; but the leaders say that the overwhelming majority is Muslim, and how can they but appeal to them through Islam. But communalism is utterly repudiated, and the service of mankind and of India is the constant ideal. 'Abd al-Ghaffār Khān has been one of India's leading proponents of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Opponents of the movement's progressive character have tried to make out that it is anti-Hindu, and encouraged the time-

honoured fear that these bellicose Pathans will sweep over the country and ruin it. Thus they have tried to frighten the Hindus and to turn them against the "Red Shirts". They also have tried to frighten the Muslim "Red Shirts," by saying that they are not anti-Hindu enough ; that if India did become free, the Hindus would oppress them. The Khudā'ī Khidmatgārs have not been impressed ; they have felt that they could look after themselves. "If the Hindus, in an independent India, really want to dominate the Muslims, then we will fight the Hindus. But first we must unite with them to fight the British."¹⁴ They are not against Pakistan¹⁵ ; a separate free Muslim area along with a free India has its attractions for them, but they will not be diverted by talk of it from efforts to free India at large from foreign control. It is all very well for communalists to arouse fear of Hindu domination in a young and minority-conscious Muslim looking for a job in the cities of industrial and professional India. It is quite a different matter when those communalists have come to the North-West Frontier, where the peasants have learned that co-operation is better than competition, and where anyway there are no Hindus in sight. Besides, the idea that Pathans should be afraid of anyone is rather laughable.

The Ahrār Party. In 1930, the time of Civil Disobedience, various Muslim leaders in the Punjab organised the "Ahrār" party as an Indian-nationalist and Muslim group. It re-expressed something of the old Khilāfatist-movement tradition : an ardent and explicitly Muslim enthusiasm for Indian liberty. It grew among men who had been alienated from the Khilāfat organisation since the latter deserted nationalism and turned quite reactionary. It grew also among men who were being alienated from the Congress, in an increasingly communalist India.

During 1930 and 1932 the Ahrārs worked side by side with the Congress in the Civil Disobedience movement. They worked

14. One of the movement's leaders, in a personal interview with the present writer, Peshawar, 20 February 1941.

15. Frontier Congressmen abstained from voting on the Congress's anti-Pakistan resolution, 2 May 1942 ; see also their president's statement, below, Chap. Five, Section : The Most Recent Phase ; 1942 ff., reference 52

hard and well, making many sacrifices, and contributing a good deal to the nationalist struggle. We have already noticed that during this period many of the Punjab Muslim Congress workers left the Congress and joined the Ahrār group. The party by its activities attracted many Muslims, leaders and followers. It gained the respect of many more, and of non-Muslims also. The Congress could not but admire its effectiveness, though it regretted the communal tinge.

Steadily, fervently, inspiredly, the Ahrārs played their noble part in the fight of a subject people for its freedom. Against the brutal exploitation of the alien imperialism, an exploitation that impoverished the body and impoverished the soul, this group like many another set its face; and called for a mighty endeavour to build for man a better world.

Since that time the Ahrār leaders have continued to carry on their work of agitation and propaganda. They have been resolutely anti-British, and socially have been remarkably radical. They developed a large and important following throughout the Punjab and in neighbouring areas. The groups affected were the lower middle classes and the well-to-do peasantry. The spread into the village areas began rather recently. The movement has been wholeheartedly determined. For a time, too, it was well organised, and was the premier Muslim party in the north-west. Since about 1936, however, the organisation has shown a tendency to disintegrate.

The party has been religious in that its appeal has been to religious emotional idealism. The leaders quoted the Qur'ān and Muslim history with stimulating profusion. During the 1930's, they attacked the immorality of imperialism and capitalism; and painted a decidedly attractive picture of how much better, ethically and religiously and economically, a co-operative society would be. They made it a Muslim moral duty to work for a better world—leaving those who continued in their petty government posts feeling quite sheepish. They called in the name of Islam, in the name of divine justice and human dignity. Man's eternal thirst for moral and material good made the response large. The movement's religiousness has involved no touch of

puritanism or rigidity ; the leaders have been good livers, expansive. They have been world and life-affirming, and have believed in divine dynamic progress. They talked quite radical socialism, of the emotional, romantic type.

The party has been aggressive. "It agrees with the political programme of the Congress but regards it as half-hearted and timid. It also wants a bolder economic program."¹⁶ It aided the lower classes of Kashmir in their self-assertive movement of 1931-2—an interference in State politics of which the Congress has always been shy. When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, the Ahrār party was the first organisation in India to declare against it, as being a purely imperialist struggle.

Communally, the party has generally stood for Hindu-Muslim and other co-operation. And its implacable Indian nationalism has implied an anti-British alliance with all comers. But latterly it took to leading the Sunnis in the Lucknow Sunni-Shī'ī riots—between the two major groups within traditional Islam—feeling it a pity to allow the Muslim League to be the sole profiteer of all antagonisms. In the Punjab it has had a Shī'ī among its most prominent leaders; and there is no question there of only a sectarian following ; this new move was purely United Provinces tactics, a readiness to do almost anything to attract Muslims and to keep them from being attracted to the arch-enemy the League. Such an incident shows how unstable the Ahrār ideology has been, and how tenuous is the line between communal and communalist groups—i.e. between those supporting their community and those supporting communalism.

The movement by 1940 lacked effective organisation. This was partly because it lacked adequate finance ; but partly also the character of the leadership has been responsible ; and basically the character of the movement itself. The leaders have been commanding personalities, of wide popularity ; but they have used this popularity as almost the only hold on their groups. Apart from the anti-Shī'ah demonstrations, their following in the United Provinces (as elsewhere except in the Punjab and the

16. Kabir, "Even the Muslims Disagree," *Asia*, vol. XL, no. 8 (August 1940), p. 438.

towns of the North-West Frontier Province) hardly outlived the presence of the leaders who first attracted it. The most obvious example of personal hold has been that of their prize attraction, 'Aṭā Allāh Shāh Bukhārī. This remarkable man might well lay claim to being India's most effective demagogue. He can, and repeatedly does, hold with his oratory an audience of thousands inspired and unflinchingly attentive for hours. With a telling use of apt poetry and of Islamic appeal ; with an unswerving insistence that the British must get out ; with a brilliant exposition of a romantic socialism ; he has incited the Muslims to restlessness and activity.

The Ahrār party flourished during the 1930's, particularly the early part of that decade. During the 1940's, on the other hand, the party has wilted.

In December 1940 the organisation, after consultation with Āzād, the Congress president, resolved to join in the anti-war *satyagraha* campaign initiated by the Congress. Then many of the Ahrār leaders, thinking that they saw a momentous nationalist struggle developing under the Congress, decided that the final crisis had come, and that separate organisations, "always considered . . . of a temporary nature,"¹⁷ had now fulfilled their function. They joined the Congress itself, offered *satyagraha*, and called upon all Muslims to do their fateful duty. It was not long, however, before both Āzād and they were safely in jail, and the Congress was betraying the Indian-nationalist cause utterly into an inconsequential pettiness. Meanwhile the remaining executives of the Ahrārs who were still at liberty met and decided (January 1941) that the party would continue its separate existence, though weakened by individual withdrawals. By the middle of the following month Gandhi was repudiating the idea that he had permitted any Ahrārs to offer *satyagraha*, except one or two who had joined the Congress as individuals and declared themselves full believers in non-violence. "Ahraris as such,"¹⁸

17. Mawlānā Dāwūd Ghaznawī, General Secretary of the All-India Majlis i Ahrār, in a statement issued 30 December 1940, and reported in *The Tribune*, Lahore, next day.

18. Gandhi, in a letter to Mīhr Chand, Peshawar, published in *The Tribune*, Lahore, 20 February 1941.

not being full pacifists and hand-spinners, were not acceptable to him.

This position left the Ahrār party rather frustrated—as the Congress policy left all progressives in India who were not thorough socialists. The party was by its nature somewhat liable to disintegration, and the leaders allowed themselves to be out-manoeuvred: the more radical and astute were in prison, the weaker ones were in danger of being won over.

Subsequently, the Ahrārs abandoned their once caustic denunciation of the "capitalist" League; and began to estrange themselves decisively from the Congress, only two years before their virtual leader. Not only was their former ardour for social progress turned into barely smouldering embers. In fact, they began to attack "communism" as the supreme enemy; and were even reported to be contentedly seeing visions of a pan-Islamic state, stretching from the Near East to Pakistan and beyond, brought into being by victorious German arms.

We have here not only an important instance of the drawing to a close of the phase of Muslim participation in Indian nationalism. We have also a clear illustration of the recent deepening of the social crisis. For years the Ahrār party was the vanguard of Muslim progressiveness in its area, and as such it flourished. But the movement contained an inner contradiction—in its still semi-bourgeois socialism. More recent, more acute events have made the contradiction tell. The most aware and progressive young Muslims among the Ahrārs joined the full socialist movement; and have been among its best workers. The conservatives drifted to the reactionary Muslim League. Those who remained, whether enthusiastic or perplexed, became increasingly ineffective. They wavered, spasmodically toying with now the Congress and now the League.

It is the counterpart in Muslim politics of the crisis whose divisiveness, in its intellectual and theological aspects, we studied above.

Finally, when the Muslim League, especially after 1942, began to emerge also as a positive Muslim-nationalist movement, still more of the Ahrār following got swept up within it. The few

that were left, without knowing quite what they meant, advocated the "Kingdom of God". But their party, with nothing to represent, faced almost complete disintegration.

The Mu'min and Similar Groups. The Hindu caste system of India has affected Islam also ; or, in historical terms, has not ceased to affect those Indians who are now Muslims. One aspect of this fact is that a very large group of Muslims belong to the caste of weavers. This community since the advent of industrial capitalism has been sorely hit, and many of its members have been driven to find other occupations. An organisation has grown up among these "weavers" known as the Mu'min Anṣār party or the All-India Mu'min Conference. It has been led by certain hereditary members of the caste who had become bourgeois : lawyers and the like. The basic idea has been to raise this "community," economically and culturally, and to protect it. The organisation claims to represent forty-five million low-class Muslims : "The Momin community proudly claims within its fold millions of Muslim Kisans, labourers and artisans who make their living by the sweat of their brow. It is they who form the bulk and backbone of the Muslim community in India. . . . We represent the masses as against the classes who . . . are largely represented by the Muslim League."¹⁹

The party has been opposed to the League, to Mr Jinnāh, and to Pakistan. It has felt that the League would have little sympathy for backward sections of the Muslim "community" ; it has argued that these sections must organise for self-protection against the League, much as the League has claimed that the Muslims must organise in the League for protection against the Congress. The Mu'min claim to represent the millions of low-class Muslims was probably about as valid some years ago as was the League claim to represent all Muslims.

The party's positive programme and aims have been less precise. It has wanted prestige and social uplift for its con-

19. 'Abd al-Qayyūm Anṣārī, vice-president, All-India Mu'min Conference, in a statement, Patna, 17 March, 1942, reported in *The Tribune*, Lahore, 21 March 1942.

stituency. It could be regarded as a kind of romantic trade-union ; but actually the movement has been self-contradictory. Its demands have been not for privileges as weavers, or as other proletariat, but for bourgeois privileges ; it has been a group of low-class folk organising to cease to be low-class. They have had little vision of reconstructing society so that there shall be no lower groups such as they. They are organising as a caste to protest not against the caste system itself, but against their place in it.

The party had Congress leanings, though it was never quite a Congress party. It has been somewhat Indian-nationalist, outspokenly so in its executive's resolutions. But in practice it has vacillated between demanding freedom for India and demanding recognition for itself.

Similar movements have been started of late among the butchers, and the carders. The latter group like to call themselves *Manşūrīs*, after the tenth-century martyred mystic al-Hallāj ("the carder"), Husayn ibn Manşūr.

Other Political Groupings. Most Shī'īs have been attached to the "Shī'ah Political Conference," which until the early 'forties was a mildly pro-Congress organisation. It has been fairly representative, but neither active nor powerful. It has done little more than meet annually, pass resolutions, and retire. The resolutions have been slightly progressive. Naturally, as an organised minority group within the Muslim community, it was opposed to Pakistan and the League. Latterly it has been ineffective.

In Kashmir a movement known as the "Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference" was founded, under Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh, a radical socialist. Its programme has been concerned with pressing the grievances of the masses of the population, who are mostly Muslim. It won over 90% of the seats reserved for Muslims in the last election²⁰ to the rather powerless legislature. The ruler and most of the vested interests of the state are Hindu. To avoid confusing the issue, the Conference in 1938 changed its constitution and name, to the "Jammu and Kashmir

20. Figures given in Krishna, *The Problem of Minorities*, p. 322.

National Conference," to include the few Hindus and Sikhs who are on its side of the class struggle. Naturally, the Hindu communalists, attacking it, have said that it is still really the same; the Muslim communalists, attacking it, have said that in the change it has slaughtered the rights of the Muslim community. Actually, it continues to have the support of the overwhelming majority of the population.

Bengal is a province where the Muslims if grouped together form the numerically dominant community by a slight margin, but where most of them are economically powerless. Provincial politics has been subtle and unstable. A party not strictly communal but very predominantly Muslim and even Muslim communalist was the Krishak Praja party. It "grew out of the peasantry's fight for agrarian rights. . . . It aims at agrarian revolution but through parliamentary and constitutional methods."²¹ This peasant party did well at the polls in 1937, and its leader, Faḍl al-Ḥaqq, became premier of a coalition. The Congress group hesitated too long before deciding whether to support him; partly as a consequence of this, Mr Faḍl al-Ḥaqq, continuing as premier, abandoned his party's progressive programme, and presently abandoned the party itself. He joined the Muslim League, as did a majority of the Muslim members of the Assembly, after election. But he was not a good Leaguer, and constantly diverged from the policies of that body and from its discipline; must to Mr Jinnāh's annoyance. At the close of 1941 he was expelled from the League,²² but was still able to form a new coalition ministry in the Bengal Assembly, and a new party. During 1942 he undertook to organise a rival "Progressive All-India Muslim League"; he campaigned for Hindu-Muslim co-operation; and he showed signs of taking the initiative in endeavouring to solve the Indo-British "deadlock" after the imprisonment of Congress leaders in August. But by the end of that year he was denying that he had ever been out of the Muslim League²³ and boasting of his friendship with Jinnāh

21. Kabir, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

22. *The Tribune*, Lahore, 12 December 1941.

23. *ibid.*, 17 November 1941.

whom he had often maligned. He continued to vacillate—on nationalist, on communalist, and on social issues. In March 1944, the governor forced him to resign; and his ministry, which had lost most of its support among the people, was presently replaced by a Muslim League one.

In the Punjab, a "Unionist Party" of all communities, representing the landed vested interests of all, won the 1937 elections with a sizable majority. The Muslim premier and all the Muslim members of the Unionist party in the Punjab Assembly joined the League after they had been elected. However, as in Bengal, these men were recalcitrant, a constant disturbance to the Muslim League authorities.

In the United Provinces a "Unity Board" was established in 1933, comprising almost all Muslim groups: Shawkat 'Alī, the Ahrārs, the *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā'*, etc. It was supported by the Congress. It then joined with the Muslim League before the League turned to overt reaction; in fact, on the understanding that it was going to reform itself and be progressive, and that the landlords would be excluded. After the elections it was deserted by the Congress, and it has stayed with the League since.

In the North-West Frontier Province, independents, largely supported by the Khudā'ī Khidmatgārs, won practically every seat in 1937; and the brother of 'Abd al-Ghaffār became premier. The group then joined the Congress.

In Sind, another "Muslim" province, politics has been quite unstable. The largest party in the Assembly were the "Nationalist Muslims," allies of the Congress, with whose support they formed for a time a coalition ministry. At the end of 1942 the premier of this coalition, Allāh Bakhsh, was summarily dismissed by the British for his Indian nationalism. Various other nationalist members of the Assembly were imprisoned; and a new coalition was then formed, predominantly Muslim League.

In Baluchistan there has been a Waṭan party, Muslim Indian-nationalist. The landowners there, on the other hand, have been with the Muslim League.

The Āzād Muslim Conference. In March 1940 there gathered

at Delhi representatives of the various Indian-nationalist Muslim parties and groups—the Congress Muslims, Ahrārs. *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā'*, Shī'ah Political Conference, and so on; virtually all Muslim groups except the Muslim League and the Khākūrs. Allāh Bakhsh, premier of Sind, presided at this "Āzād (i.e. 'Free') Muslim Conference". The delegates, representing at that time probably still the majority of India's Muslims, came to protest against the Pakistan idea, and against the use made of the Muslims by the British government and others as an excuse for political inaction.

They strongly supported the Congress's plan for an Indian constituent assembly, elected by full adult suffrage, to draw up a constitution for India; the Muslim delegates to that assembly to be elected communally, and to have the power to devise safeguards for Muslim culture, personal law, political rights, and economic position—this devising to be without interference from any other community or the British. The Conference set up an executive called the Āzād Muslim Board, "to preach communal amity and to devise means for a permanent solution of the communal problem."²⁴ Further, it resolved: "India, with its geographical and political boundaries is an indivisible whole. . . . All nooks and corners of the country contain the hearths and homes of the Muslims, and the cherished historic monuments of their religion and culture, which are dearer to them than their lives. . . . This Conference unreservedly and strongly repudiates the baseless charge levelled against Indian Muslims by the agents of British Imperialism and others that they are an obstacle in the path of Indian freedom and emphatically declares that the Muslims are fully alive to their responsibility and consider it inconsistent with their tradition and derogatory to their honour to lag behind others in the struggle for the country's independence."²⁵

The Conference and its executive met from time to time thereafter, and continued to speak for Indian freedom. But the

24. Sarkar, *Hindustan Year Book*, 1941, p. 465.

25. From a resolution adopted at the Conference; given in Rajendra Prasad, *Pakistan*, pp. 61-2.

group which they represented was dwindling rapidly. In October 1942 the president announced that the Āzād Muslims had produced a constitutional plan "envisaging linguistic provinces with the right of self-determination to the point of secession but in the context of Indian freedom"²⁶; their emphasis was still on the positive programme of mobilisation of the people behind the nationalist demand. They called for a Congress-League agreement, for a nationalist independent government.

The Muslim Majlis. In May 1944, the same Indian-nationalist Muslim groups that had held the Āzād Muslim Conference launched a new political party: the All-India Muslim Majlis. It differed from the co-ordinating Āzād Muslim Board in that the latter was "merely a Federal Board which would neither approach the masses nor enlist members"²⁷; it differed from the various already existing parties whose leaders united to form it, by being an all-India organisation, centralised and comprehensive. In it the Indian-nationalists among the Muslims, whether in the Congress or in one of the numerous smaller non-League Muslim organisations, united to concentrate their strength and to put their case with the maximum effect. The idea was that all Muslims who sympathised with its cause would join the Majlis, while retaining if they wished a simultaneous membership in any other Indian-nationalist organisation.

The aims of the Majlis were defined as follows: "To guide and lead the Muslims unitedly for the achievement of complete national independence and other correct objectives" and "to bring about a Hindu-Muslim settlement."²⁸ The use of the word "unitedly" indicates that all hope of non-communal politics in India had disappeared by 1944: even non-League Muslims, including those in the Congress, felt that the Muslim community

26. Allāh Bakhsh, at a press conference, New Delhi, 7 October 1942, as reported in *The Tribune*, Lahore, 10 October 1942.

27 From the first press statement of the president, Khwājah 'Abd al-Majīd, Aligarh, 16 May 1944 (*The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, Dak edition, 19 May 1944).

28. From the resolution at the meeting in Delhi of Nationalist Muslims at which the Majlis was formed (*ibid.*, 12 May 1944).

should act together as a group. But that group should act with, not against, the Hindu group. The need for a Hindu-Muslim settlement has now been recognised by all elements as paramount. And it is somewhat recognised even by these Indian-nationalist Muslims that that means in effect a settlement between the Congress and the League. Leaders of the Majlis have repeatedly stated that they would welcome such a settlement²⁹; and have admitted that the League is a larger Muslim organisation than their own.³⁰ The president asked his followers to pray for the success of the Gandhi-Jinnāh meeting of the late summer, 1944,³¹ and the Indian-nationalist Muslims like all other progressives in India of whatever party, were acutely disappointed when those two leaders failed.

The hope of the Majlis leaders, therefore, has not been so much that they could persuade the Muslims, to follow them rather than the League; rather they have hoped to use their best efforts for conciliation. When asked why they do not, then, join the League as obviously now the Muslims' national organisation and try to influence it from within, their answer has been simply to point out that they are not allowed to do so: the Muslim League has written the goal of Pakistan into its constitution, and therefore no one can honestly be a member who still hopes for a united India. Some of the Majlis leaders have even stated that the main object of the party, besides working for a Hindu-Muslim agreement, is to present the case against partitioning India when and if the Pakistan issue is put to a Muslim plebiscite.³²

Such, then, is the latter end of the Muslim part in a unified Indian nationalism. The Muslim Majlis has some prominent leaders, though they are mostly persons who owe their fame to an earlier tradition; for instance, the president is a venerable Khilāfat veteran. It has had a considerable amount of emotional

29. For instance, Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, of the Working Committee of the Majlis, a Congress leader, in a press statement, *ibid.*, 24 June 1944.

30. For instance, the president, Khwājah 'Abd al-Majīd, at a public meeting, Aligarh, 30 May 1944 (*ibid.*, 4 June 1944).

31. *ibid.*, 14 August 1944.

32. See reference 29.

support from many persons, though organisationally it has been very weak. (It has admitted this, but has hoped to build its organisation in the future.)

The Communist Party, with what peasant and proletariat backing it has had, supported the Āzād Muslim Board in 1940 ; by 1944 it had transferred its support to the progressive section within the Muslim League. It is interesting, also, that the Muslim Majlis has represented more of the old orthodox Islam; while the Muslim League, with its English name, its almost foreign president, and its secular programme, has a larger following and is growing. At one time Indian nationalism of the Congress type, represented for the Muslims a secular or religiously liberal trend while communal organisations seemed to embody a reversion to religious traditionalism. The reverse is now the case.

The most advanced groups within Indian Islam have deserted simple Indian nationalism.

Chapter Four

ISLAMIC NATIONALISM : THE KHĀKSĀR MOVEMENT

Out of the confused discontent of the people there arose during the 1930's among the upper sections of the workers and the lower sections of the petty bourgeoisie in Indian Islam the vigorous Khāksār movement. This is a movement without a specific aim, but with elaborate and very attractive methods. The methods succeeded in organising, dominating, and delighting a sizable and powerful group of men.

The Khāksār programme had one main emphasis : discipline ; and two main items : militarist training, and social service. The members of the organisation in each district met every evening of the week, dressed in a brown uniform and carrying a spade (the symbol of the movement) ; and underwent, for an hour or more, a thorough military drill and parade. In addition, three-day regional camps were organised from time to time, and the training was intensified. Sham battles were held, tactics studied, physical training pursued. The Khāksārs worked hard at these drills ; the discipline was entirely new to most of them, and they were learning new skills, and expressing new attitudes. The social service consisted in being generally useful in an orderly way: acting as ushers in mosques and at every other feasible gathering, giving assistance after earthquakes, digging wells, etc. The discipline of the movement was rigorous, and aimed at producing an effective body of alert men ready physically and emotionally to obey orders well.

The movement emphasised that there is too much sloppiness in Eastern countries ; it endeavoured to get rid of this, and to raise instead a smart, systematic, sturdy generation. Khāksārs have been prepared for sudden emergencies ; for instance, they said at the outbreak of the war that they alone would be ready and unflustered if air-raid work were needed in a suddenly

attacked Indian town. Furthermore, they said that there is too much servility. The movement would get rid of this too, giving its members a virile self-respect. Instead of bowing to foreigners, flattering or fearing them, Khāksārs must stand up to them, approaching them with a salute, with offers to help ; respectful, but expecting respect in return. They have accepted hospitality from no one, solicited nothing, stood proudly on their own resources.

The movement has been distinctly religious. It has been puritanical, emphasising religious discipline both within the organisation and in daily life ; the ascetic instincts have been fundamental to it. It has catered also for other religious emotions, especially eliciting religious devotion and enthusiasm. It has presented itself as the "real" and exclusive Islam. The degraded and degrading religion of the old-fashioned clerics has been attacked with the most unrestrained and contemptuous vehemence. Non-Muslims have been permitted to join, if they acknowledge monotheism and immortality ; but the appeal has been to Muslims, and virtually only Muslims have joined.

Through its religious character, socially interpreted, the movement acquired what long-term policy, or semblance of long-term policy, it has had ; and made up for what it has not. For those who were interested in such things, it had one or two general ideas, which could serve, vaguely, as aims. The most important was the social approach to religion. The function of religion, hence the function of the Khāksārs, was held to be the building up of a strong, healthy, prosperous nation. All aspects of Islam not relevant to this were repudiated. The glorious past of Islam and particularly its early conquests were stressed, and the ideal of a new Muslimised world. Khāksārs were encouraged to believe that they were a group devoted to creating a well-ordered, decidedly progressive, economically flourishing society.

Sometimes their rehabilitation of Islam was taken in the aggressive sense of Muslim sovereignty over the entire world, the establishment of the Muslim community as the ruling class in each country. This was to be achieved by military domination, and the Khāksār training of Muslims on military lines was

deemed essential. The conquest and domination of the world, they said, was Muḥammad's purpose ; true Qur'ānic Islam is intrinsically a religion of military and political power. Sometimes, the movement proclaimed rather : "Hindus and Sikhs must know that we are not against them. If we get power, we will work for them too."¹ Thus, Khāksārs so inclined had the opportunity to interpret the "nation" for which they and their religion were working, as meaning India ; just as more ardent communalists might interpret it as meaning Islam. For those with vague socialist ideas, it was suggested that the goal was "the nation which has for its symbol the weapon of the poor and the workers. . . . A nation as such [*sc.* such as this] will never aim at establishing the government of the capitalists by trampling down the workers. . . . The Khaksar movement does not aim at the exaltation of the favoured classes of people but at lifting up the masses."²

The precise nature, then, of the society for which the Khāksārs were working was not mentioned. They maintained that it would be ideal : "Our aim is peace, love equality, and justice for all."³ But more important than its precise nature was the fact that they were working for it, with all their might, and with means which were likely to prove effective. Thus the few intellectuals who were involved saw the Khāksār movement as the practical expression of that dynamism which they read in Iqbāl ; only here was modern, dynamic Islam being actually realised.

However, the rank and file Khāksār was not concerned with the ultimate goal. If questioned, he said: "Ask the leader," and he was content to be an energetic follower. His lack of responsibility for long-term plans was an essential element of the organisation, and of its attraction for him. The leader claimed to be "now collecting bricks, lime and mortar, so that to discuss the

1 A Khāksār leader to the present writer ; January 1941.

2. Mashriqī, *Qawl i Faysal*, quoted in translation in Subhan, "The Khaksar Movement," *Bulletin of the Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies*, Series XXVIX (*sic.* ; *sc.* XXIX), July-Aug. 1941 ; p. 15.

3. Mashriqī, "The Khaksar Movement," *The Light*, Lahore, 24 December 1936.

completed edifice would be irrelevant"⁴; and again, he explicitly stated : "Our 'Khaksar' does not know exactly what he stands for. He has but 'to do and die' as he is ordered."⁵

The membership of the movement, according to its own claim, has been numbered at about 400,000. An official estimate from Simla made in 1941 was reported⁶ to set the figure at 30,000. Probably the actual number has been very considerably over 50,000. The movement has been strongest in the Punjab and the United Provinces, with some considerable influence in Sind, and the towns of the North-West Frontier Province. About 1940 it spread to the towns of South India.

The important leaders of the Khāksār movement were upper class. The ordinary members—with the exception of a handful of higher-class persons, mostly idealistic intellectuals—were the very petty bourgeoisie, plus the better-off labourers. There were none of the poorest peasants, or of the true town proletariat. The movement, completely lacking in economic programme, could hardly attract these. But in any case they were specifically barred, since the members had to pay an appreciable fee, and also had to supply some of their own equipment and transport charges to the camps. The movement was charged with receiving foreign financial support ; for example, from Hitlerite Germany. But the leader ridiculed this by replying that he could get all the support he wished, in India. This was true. The movement issued bonds promising payment when India became free ; land-owners and other reactionaries subscribed to these liberally. For instance, Nur Husayn of Tanda Bago was reported⁷ to have donated to the movement close to a million rupees and some of his land.

Money was collected also from the petty bourgeoisie : men glad to see the Islamic community developing a fighting force.

The organisation was confined to men. The age limits were

4. Chakravarty, "Mystery of the Khaksars," *Asia*, vol. XXXIX, no. 8 (August 1939), p. 433.

5. Mashriqi, loc. cit.

6. *The Tribune*, Lahore, 8 June 1941.

7. Chakravarty, op. cit., p. 436.

sixteen and sixty. There were four classes of members : first, ordinary ; secondly, "those who have given up all property and joined for life"⁸ ; thirdly, a small volunteer corps who have spectacularly signed in blood a pledge to obey to the death—virtually, a suicide squad ; and finally, a reserve force, of men who would undergo three months' training, and then withdraw, paying an annual supporting fee and pledging themselves to become regular members on command. The smallest organisational unit was the neighbourhood district, under the charge of a petty officer assisted by a clerk. This was the unit for the drill every evening after sunset prayers. The organisation was pyramided on these units, with officers at each grade, in military fashion. The officers of most of these ranks had each an assistant, one of whose functions was to act as a check on the officer, seeing that orders from above were carried out. In addition to all this there was a highly organised secret service, spying continually and reporting, having officers disciplined, and generally ensuring that authority was maintained from the top down. On occasion, leaders—the more prominent the better—were publicly whipped. They submitted stoically, and the movement was thoroughly impressed.

A weekly paper was issued, *Al-Islāh*. Along with it were delivered to each unit the weekly orders from headquarters. *Al-Islāh* fed the enthusiasm of the movement, and kept it emotionally and intellectually unified, to supplement the disciplined organisational unity. It appeared each Friday, the holy day. It was written in an attractive fiery style, unadorned and pungent ; it was most popular, being awaited each week by the Khāksārs with an almost childish eagerness.

The supreme head of the movement, called *amir*, has been one 'Allāmah 'Ināyat Allāh Khān Mashriqī. He is extremely clever. He comes of a Muslim bourgeois family. According to *Al-Islāh*,⁹ he took his M.A. degree in mathematics at nineteen with the highest marks ever attained at the University of the Panjab, went to Cambridge and took a brilliant triple degree

8. *ibid* , p. 435.

9. 23 November 1934, according to Subhan, *op. cit* , p. 7 fn. ; cf. pp. 7 f.

there—Mathematics (being Senior Wrangler), Physics, Oriental Languages. Returning to India (1913), he entered government service in education, and did brilliantly. He was stationed most of his time in Peshawar. He met there, and listened with attention to, ardent Mawlawī Muḥammad Muḥsin Fārūqī, professor of Arabic in Islāmīyah College and one of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī's few disciples in India. After the war, Mashriqī, being an official, took no part in the nationalist, Khilāfat, and Hīrat movements ; but neither was he willing to help oppose them. Instead, he observed them, with astute and penetrating care. He also observed carefully what was in process in the wider world about him. In 1924 he wrote an essay *Tadhkirah*.

This work, a modern interpretation of Islām, was intended to be the first of ten volumes in a series ; but it has never been followed up. Part of it was written in Arabic, part in Urdu. Its publication provoked a considerable and widespread commotion : it attracted attention not only in Muslim India but in European and American orientalist circles and in the Azhar. The contention of the essay was that religion is basically a system governing the rise and decline of nations. As such, it "must be as infallible as science in its methods and results."¹⁰ The Qur'ān is the only authentic revelation, Islam the only true religion ; Islam therefore must provide the correct law of national prosperity. The early and spectacular success of the Muslim Arabs as imperial conquerors is an instance and proof of Islam's purpose and of its success. For Mashriqī, "Islam becomes . . . the most successful and universal principle of nation-building, and all religious and moral injunctions become means serving that end. It becomes, so to speak, the infallible and divine sociology."¹¹

Now the liberals too, of course, had said that Islam made a nation great, and prosperous, and had pointed to the early history as evidence. Mashriqī differed from them in that he did not sit back and applaud ; he took the proposition seriously, and

10. Kraemer, "Islam in India To-day," *Mos'em World*, vol. XXI, no. 2 (April 1931), p. 169.

11 *ibid.*, p. 170.

intended to do something about it. He was prepared to cut away from Islam as he saw it all those aspects which do not, in fact, serve national aggrandizement, and to incorporate within Islam, as a vital and active movement, what would so serve. He regarded prayers, fasting, and the like, as useful disciplines, weapons in the struggle. If Islam is the law of national progress, then whatever is deterrent or irrelevant to that progress cannot be true Islam—for instance, the traditional and pettifogging ritual ; or the theological debates on the existence of God ; or the concern about individual salvation. These things, then, must go. And the old clergy must be overthrown, they and their execrable religion. They do not know enough hygiene to use only their own toothbrushes ; how then could they lead a nation to advance?¹²

Mashriqī was willing to follow his thesis of Islam to its logical conclusions not only intellectually. He prepared to do something about it in fact.

In 1926 the Cairo Khilāfat Conference was held. India was uninterested : the *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā'*, the All-India Khilāfat Committee, the Muslim League, declined to send delegates. Mashriqī attended the Conference privately, the sole Indian there. He then went to Europe, met Hitler and discussed affairs with him. In 1931, returned to India, he organised the Khāksār movement.

This is his nation-building Islam in practice. Presumably he foresaw a period of chaos in India, and proceeded to gather under him an armed force to seize power.

The strong attraction that the Khāksār organisation had for the classes concerned is not difficult to analyse. In a grim and lonely world of capitalist competition and imperialist exploitation it gave them fellowship, thus filling an exceedingly important human need. In the frustration and pettiness of their not too successful lives it gave them the psychological compensation of importance. For instance, the uniform "is magnificent, better than that of the police ! "¹³ The movement gave them something

12. Cf. Mashriqī ; *Qawl i Fayṣal*, quoted by Subhan, op. cit., p. 12

13. A Khāksār to the present writer ; January 1941.

definite and something virile to do. (In a country where the urge for freedom has led mostly to talk and petitions, sometimes to "effeminate"¹⁴ non violence, and always to frustration, this emphasis on action received no negligible welcome. It was welcomed, too, in the hollowness of their personal lives ; Mashriqī claimed that by having them drill every evening, he eliminated cinema-going and adultery among Khāksārs.¹⁵) With its social service, the movement made them feel useful : a feeling particularly needed in a stagnant capitalism and in a conquered country. It gave the rank and file no responsibility, except for keeping their spades shining brightly and for being on time and alert at drill. They were not required to do any hard thinking. To the minority who like some responsibility and power, it gave officers' posts. For those who like an air of mystery, there was the all-pervading spying on Khāksār activity.

From a religious point of view, the movement is interesting for the adequate way in which it fulfilled the religious needs of the people concerned. The members were men who had moved from a feudal village economy to the lower rungs of a new industrial economy. The old feudal religion, the traditional Islam of the old-fashioned theologues, no longer suited them. Yet they were not advanced enough, not intellectual enough, to grasp the new sophisticated bourgeois Islam of liberals and progressive thinkers. They wanted something, more active and concrete ; and they wanted to be led. The religious clerics could not be their leaders, for these men knew that individually they were superior to those clerics. Mashriqī wrote of those traditional religionists : "Their poverty, ignorance, vileness, destitution, helplessness, dumbness, filthiness and their tatters, all these clearly indicate that, whatever they be, they can never be the leaders of this nation"¹⁶ ; and the Khāksār read this gladly, knowing himself to be cleaner, more intelligent, less poor, less helpless, than

14 Mashriqī, referring to Gandhi and the whole Congress philosophy ; quoted in Hira Lal Seth, *The Khaksar Movement*, p. 56

15. Mashriqī, "The Khaksar Movement," *The Light*, Lahore, 24 December 1936.

16. Mashriqī, *Qawl i Fayṣal*, in Subhan, op. cit., p. 13.

the local divine. Besides, what that divine had to offer these men was not adapted to their new life, was of no advantage to them ; the orthodoxy was merely an irrelevant body of subtleties, the orthopraxy an irksome bundle of impositions, of which they were happy to be rid.

Yet they were by no means so advanced, or so secure or free or bla ē, as to dispense with religion altogether. The Khāksār movement gave them two gifts of religion : the sense of being useful and significant, and the promise of salvation or reward. "In brief the one aim of the Khāksār movement is to raise, once again after the lapse of thirteen centuries, soldiers for God and Islam. . . Our aim is to be once again Kings, Rulers, World Conquerors and Supreme Masters on earth. This is our religion, our Islam, our creed and our faith."¹⁷ The ethics and the duties of their new type of Islam were relevant to their new type of life. The stress on neatness, discipline, punctuality, alacrity, was of direct benefit to them in the new semi-industrialised society. In it, too, the organised social service has been noticeably valuable, meeting modern needs.

The movement encouraged trade. It was a successful movement, and seemed progressive to its followers, because it represented in fact a step forward from a feudal into the fringes of a new industrial society. Religiously, ethically, ideologically, it expressed that one step. The movement's members were not willing, or were not able, to take more than that one step : they could not see the social problem as a whole, nor foresee the society of the future. Their concern was to adjust themselves to their small part in the present life; and as for the future (that it would mean further change was now obvious) they were training themselves to "be prepared," and they left the direction of events to their superiors.

Eschatology is still important for these people; but they have been less passive in it than the feudal peasant. Long tradition in a helpless society has taught that a supernatural leader or messiah will come, and inaugurate the golden age; that until his arrival the exploited can do nothing of themselves. Khāksār

propaganda had to fight this tradition, and in its constituency was somewhat successful; for nowadays those people were vaguely aware that they themselves could act and achieve something toward the golden age. It is the sociologically significant transition from pre- to post millennialism.

The Khāksār movement claimed that its programme "included" communism. Communism—which has not, in its propaganda, successfully exploited the emotional and spiritual values of socialism—was dubbed a part to which the Khāksār would add religion and "spiritual" objectives to make a whole. On occasion, however, it would transpire that the Khāksārs were aiming at "Muslim cummunism," and not "the present corrupted form of the communism prevalent in Europe."¹⁸ Their spade represented, among other things, levelling—of the ground and of human society. "There is no intrinsic difference in my mind between rich and poor, the high and the low, the employer and the employee. Let all, therefore, come in one line and march together!"¹⁹ (Notice here the usual fascist technique of denying inequalities instead of removing them. The technique is dear to the religious.) The word *Khāksār* means "humble". Islam, the Khāksār leaders said, is socially (but not politically) democratic.

The spade was their symbol, and they indulged in its symbolism to the full. It represented the dignity of honest labour, or the weapon of the poor, or Muḥammad at the Battle of Uhud, or digging for truth (with it the Khāksār "will remove the mound of centuries, uncovering Islamic reality"²⁰)—and so on. Those so minded could lavish on the symbol of the spade all their mystic idealism and religious emotion. Besides, the tool was endlessly useful—as a pillow to sleep on, a pot to cook in, a dish to eat from, a weapon to fight with. An illiterate and devoted Lahore Khāksār produced verses listing over a hundred uses for his spade.

The Khāksār movement was certainly emotionally satisfying.

18. *ibid.*, p. 15.

19. Mashriqī, "The Khaksar Movement," *The Light*, Lahore 14 December 1936.

20. Chakravarti, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

The movement was organised in 1931. For the first year or two it forged ahead unobtrusively, drilling its men. Then its attacks on the Muslim clergy began to attract attention, and there was an open collision. The orthodox denounced Mashriqī and his movement as heretical and apostate; Khāksār vituperation of the theologues increased. Meanwhile the movement continued to grow, in size and in strength. These were the years following the World Economic Depression, and following the failure once again of Congress Civil Disobedience. Frustration and defeat, increasing world chaos, Indian economic stagnation and increasing communal bitterness—this was the environment within which the Khāksār organisation was built up. It grew also because of official favour: if the bureaucrats did not support it, as was widely insinuated, at least they gave it an unwonted tolerance. A fascist force might prove useful to a Baldwin or Chamberlain government, as to its Indian conservative supporters.

In 1939 a Sunnī-Shī'ī conflict flared in Lucknow. Mashriqī announced that the Khāksār movement would keep order among Muslims, or impose it upon them; and he ordered his men to march on the city. A band from the Punjab armed with spades reached the provincial border, where the United Provinces police refused them entry. They proceeded, not heeding the refusal. The result was that the first Khāksār clash with government forces was with a Congress government; they were first fired upon by Congress police in a predominantly Hindu province.

The following spring they again came into troubled political prominence, in Lahore. Mashriqī suddenly made demands upon the Unionist government—for the use of the official Radio station, or premission to have a private one; for an official treasury under Khāksār control; and such extravagant requests. The provincial government decided that the organisation was getting too dangerous: it declared one of its publications objectionable, and soon afterwards (February 1940) imposed a ban on all non-official military parading. The Khāksārs decided to defy the ban; a couple of thousand were ordered to assemble in Lahore, and 300 of the martyr-volunteers collected in a mosque and struck

against the police (19 March 1940). It was an attempted *coup d'état*, but it failed ; the police opened fire, numerous Khāksārs were killed, and after two or three days, during which Lahore was in considerable commotion, order was forcibly restored. Later, detailed plans for a province-wide *coup* were uncovered by the government secret service.

(One noteworthy and perhaps significant detail about this episode is that during the disturbance the movement got out of hand ; some of the Khāksār leaders lost control, and units took the initiative, moving on their own.)

Mashriqī, who had meanwhile gone to Delhi, outside the province, now announced that he had had nothing to do with the *putsch* ; which had taken place, he said, without his orders. None the less, he was put in prison ; and was kept confined for almost three years. The Khāksār movement was declared an unlawful organisation in the Punjab and Delhi. Nineteen of those arrested in Lahore in March were sentenced to deportation for life.

Towards the end of 1940 the ban specifically on the Khāksār organisation was lifted ; the general ban on military parades remained in force. Of the 1700 and more Khāksārs who had been arrested, only fifty were kept imprisoned. Early in 1941 strenuous efforts were made by the leaders to reorganise and revitalise the movement. The question whether marching in single file constitutes parading was raised, and decided negatively by the police, in favour of the Khāksārs. Discussions were held, plans considered. Finally the acting head of the movement issued orders for all Khāksārs to collect in mosques in various centres in India on Friday, 6 June 1941, to offer prayers for the release of Mashriqī.

Two days before the appointed Friday the government of India suddenly declared the Khāksār organisation unlawful, and made several hundred arrests throughout the country. The government stated that it had reason to believe, presumably through its secret service, that another and more extensive *coup d'état* was planned for the Friday demonstration. Most of the arrested Khāksārs were presently released, on apologising and giving

undertakings not to pursue illegal activities.

Mashriqī, however, was kept imprisoned, and repeated petitions for his release were rejected. Finally, apparently, he saw no hope of winning the tussle with the government ; and he virtually surrendered. On 16 January 1942, from jail he issued a proclamation to his party ordering "the Khaksars to discontinue altogether for the duration of the war the display of uniforms or badges, the carrying of 'belchas'²¹ or any other weapons, and marches or drilling of any description."²² Thereupon he was released from prison, but interned within Madras province. The legal ban on the Khāksār organisation, even after this shedding of its military aspects, continued.

The government, in August 1942, launched its policy of ruthless repression of the Congress, resulting in the upsurge of a "nationalist" anti-British struggle—of which great advantage could be, and was, taken by the pro-Japanese elements. 'Allāmah Mashriqī ordered his Khāksārs not to participate in that "suicidal"²³ struggle ; and not to take part in any form of anti-war activities or propaganda.²⁴ By January 1943, after much discussion in the Assemblies and pressure by the Muslim League, etc. ; after much consideration, no doubt, by the police and the authorities as to whether the movement could be useful in an anti-nationalist or anti-Hindu or anti-revolutionary sense ; and after further guarantees that for the duration of the war the movement would confine itself to innocuous pursuits, and even its social service would be individual ; the leader was released from internment, and the Khāksār party was declared once more a legal body.

The question then became : would the Khāksār movement, though debilitated by its past suppression and limited by the new conditions and undertakings, be able to revive and rehabilitate

21. *Belcha* : spade.

22. Statement by 'Allāmah Mashriqī, made public in a government Press Note, Madras, 16 January 1942 ; as reported in *The Tribune*, Lahore, 17 January 1942.

23. *The Civil & Military Gazette*, Lahore, Dak edition, 12 August 1942.

24. *The Tribune*, Lahore, 4 January 1943.

itself as to become an effective force in the event of a major crisis. The longer that crisis has been postponed and the less likely a period of chaos has become, the more evident has grown the answer "no". The Khāksār organisation has dwindled ; and the movement has more and more been relegated to being but a romantic social service group, and its leaders to pleading with Mr Jinnāh for a Congress-League settlement.²⁵ Like other non-League Muslim groups in the country, by the mid-'forties the Khāksārs had no longer any programme of their own; but were urging upon the Muslim League what they deemed for it a good programme.

25. For example : in 1943 : at a meeting of the Madras provincial Khāksār organisation, 23 June 1943 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 26 June 1943) ; Mashriqī in a statement (ibid., 27 August 1943). In 1944 : Mashriqī, first in irate and later in humble correspondence with Jinnāh, and in statements to the press (*The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, Dak editions, 21 March 1944, 11 May 1944, 23 May 1944, 3 August 1944).

Chapter Five

ISLAMIC NATIONALISM : THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

The Conservative Phase : 1906-36

On 1 October 1906, a deputation of the Muslim upper and upper middle classes was led by that heretical but pompous potentate the Āghā Khān into the presence of the viceroy, Lord Minto. His Highness presented His Excellency with an address signed by "nobles, ministers of various states, great landowners, lawyers, merchants, and . . . many other of His Majesty's Mahommedan subjects."¹ This group of Muslims and the government together decided on an imperial policy (soon embodied particularly in the Minto-Morley reforms) of special British favour for communalist and loyal Muslims. To organise such Muslims and to receive the favour, the Muslim League was presently born.

It met first at Dacca, at the end of 1906 ; and annually thereafter. It was an English-speaking group. At the beginning it was thoroughly loyal, merely asking for jobs for the group that it represented. At the first session, at least two staunch Indian-nationalist Muslims attended,² in the hope of toning down the communalism and conservatism of this new organisation. Most of the progressive Muslim group, however, simply neglected the League, leaving it to the less advanced section.

By 1912, however, as we know, the whole Muslim middle class was reaching an anti-British stage. Even the conservative

1. From Lord Minto's reply to the deputation, given in Minto, *India, Minto and Morley, 1905-1910*, p. 46. Further, it may be noted that Mary Minto says in her journal, speaking of the delegates at the tea-party at the Viceroy's that afternoon in their honour : ". . . most of them speak English . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 47).

2. The two were Sayyid Ḥasan Imām, and Mazhar al-Ḥaqq (*Eminent Mussalmans*, p. 274).

Yet it must not be supposed that the Muslim League was becoming radical. Its attitude to the war and to its Khilāfat implications lays bare the essential timidity. "It is a sore point with us," according to the presidential address of that year, "that the Government of our Caliph should be at war with the Government of our King-Emperor. We should all have been pleased to see our brethren in the Faith fighting side by side with the soldiers of the British Empire . . ."4 and so on : much wishful sentimentalism, ending with the hope that when peace came, Muslim countries would be treated "in such a way that their dignity will not be compromised."⁵

3. Lovett, *History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, p. 92.

4. *ibid.*, p. 101.

5. *ibid.*, p. 102.

were looking forward. This agreement, known as the Congress-League Pact of 1916, conceded separate electorates for Muslims, and representational weightage for minorities in the legislatures. The principle of minority weightage meant that in the legislatures of the central government and also in those provinces where Muslims were in a minority, the number of seats for the Muslim community would be proportionately greater than the percentage of Muslims in the population concerned. In provinces where Muslims were in a majority, notably Bengal and the Punjab, they would get less than their numerically due proportion of seats.

During the next few years, nationalist excitement in India grew. The Muslim League was no body to lead radicalism of any kind, however ; and well the Leaguers knew it. Muslims' anti-Britishness, accordingly, expressed itself more adequately through other organs ; the Congress, the All-India Khilāfat Conferences and Committees, etc. The League also ran, in an anti-government direction ; but feebly. Little attention was paid to it until after the Non-Co-operation movement collapsed and the Turkish *khilāfah* ("Caliphate") was abolished.

Then (1924) the Muslim League was at once revived, and its small militant element ousted. Its dominant liberal-conservative group breathed more freely in India's new atmosphere of loyalty and co-operation. It continued to represent only the landlord class and the upper middle class of Muslims. Even of these, a good many were content to co-operate uncommunally with the conservatives among the Hindus, within the new Councils.

At the end of 1927, the British in Westminster appointed a commission to consider a new Indian constitution. Opposition to this completely un-Indian commission was widespread ; even the Muslim conservatives within the League could not agree among themselves whether to co-operate with it or not. The League therefore split, one group meeting in Lahore under Sir Muḥammad Shafi' and expressing its unflinching loyalty to Britain, come what might—come even the Simon Commission ; another group gathering in Calcutta under Jinnāh, determining

to boycott the Commission, as the Congress was going to do. The Congress had issued the Nehru Report, a liberal constitution for India of which it demanded acceptance within a year, under penalty of Civil Disobedience. The Calcutta section of the League authorised its president to negotiate with the Congress for another alliance, on the basis of five communalist amendments to the Nehru Report. Of these, the most important was a proposal to reserve for the Muslim community one-third of the seats in the central legislature. The Congress refused to make any such concession, and nothing came of the suggested alliance.

The Civil Disobedience movement relegated the League in both its branches to oblivion ; except in the minds of the British authorities. The latter, for their Round Table Conference, were looking about for dependable delegates. The League from among its members supplied several of these, although it was not represented officially. The government, of course, had their old standby the Āghā Khān leading the Muslim contingent. Shortly after the Conferences we find this same gentleman in the forefront of a presently successful move to reunite the Muslim League into one body. Even as a single unit, however, the League continued for a time to be without great significance. It so happened, too, that at about this time a good many of its prominent leaders died.

The Reactionary Phase : 1936-42

One of the survivors, the able sophisticated Muḥammad 'Alī Jinnāh, undertook to reorganise the Muslim League on a totally new footing. It was decided to inaugurate a policy progressive enough and wide enough to attract a large body of Muslims ; to broaden the organisation, setting up new committees and boards throughout the country, with the same purpose ; and to intensify communalist propaganda. A complete change gradually came over the Muslim League : from being the meeting-place and organ of a few high officials, wealthy landowners, and successful professional men, it was transformed into a movement, vigorous and popular.

Much support was readily forthcoming for the new programme. Conservative forces all over the world were becoming

aware of the danger of their own extinction in social progress ; were turning to ways and means of preventing that progress, of diverting the restless or angry masses from advance. The rise of fascism in Germany from 1933, financed by the *haute bourgeoisie*, was the most obvious example of a general and ominous trend. In India Islam, a few years later, the wealthy conservatives, saw the value of the new League policy, building up a strong and aggressive organisation, thoroughly communalist and the foe of Indian nationalism, and able to control the allegiance of a large and powerful group. Consequently they encouraged Mr Jinnāh's venture, backing him staunchly with funds and other aid.

Fascism in Europe looked to the barons of big business for its financial support, but for emotional support it drew on the economically and otherwise frustrated petty bourgeoisie. Its especial fountain of enthusiasm was the idealistic middle-class youth. A similar situation was found with the Muslim League. Big industrialists in India are not usually Muslims, so that the League was supported financially rather by landlords and high officials. (There was hardly a Muslim member of either of these two classes who was not favourable to the League.) But the zealous ardour of its impetuous programme was provided by the young men of the middle classes.

That the Muslim League underwent a basic change about 1936 and soon after, is revealed in the fact that its young enthusiasts to-day think of the League and speak of it as being only nine or ten years old. Jinnāh, in his presidential address at Lucknow, 1937, admitted that the organisation had never before been in touch with any but the upper strata of Muslims. He virtually admitted also that it had launched forth in its new activities since the preceding year in order to win votes at the coming elections, with their widened franchise. "On the 12th April, 1936, the Muslim League at its Sessions, the first time in its history, under-took the policy and programme of mass contact. The League considered the prevailing conditions and surveyed the situation that we had to face the forthcoming elections. . . ."6

6. Jinnab, *Presidential Address, All-India Muslim League, Lucknow Session, October 1937*, p. 1.

Reorganisation on the new lines was not, however, accomplished in time for the 1937 elections. At that time less than 4½% of the Muslim electorate was persuaded to vote for the League. This was a sorry showing indeed. The election results clearly showed that something energetic must be done, and done quickly. They showed too that it must be something sounding decidedly progressive.

At its Lucknow session, October 1937, the League first exhibited publicly its new policy and new trends. It announced that "the Muslim League stands for full national democratic self-government for India."⁷ However, it did not elaborate this but rather paid particular attention to attacking the Congress plan for attaining that self-government, its demand for a constituent assembly. This demand it ridiculed rather than criticised nor did it suggest an alternative. It also ridiculed the Congress for the failure of the two previous nationalist struggles, and for the acceptance of office under the new "reactionary"⁸ constitution. It inaugurated its bitter anti-Congress communalist campaign, and appealed for a division in the nationalist ranks. Progressive Muslims must form a separate group, under the League. Besides the pro-British Muslims, who are of course condemned, "there is another group which turns towards the Congress, and they do so because they have lost faith in themselves. I want the Mussalmans to believe in themselves and take their destiny in their own hands. . . . No settlement with the majority is possible."⁹ A social programme, even, was adumbrated: "Your foremost duty is to formulate a constructive and ameliorative programme of work for the people's welfare and to devise ways and means of social, economic and political uplift of the Mussalmans."¹⁰ This hint of social plan went along with a protracted attack on the Congress social programme, above all on its attempt to establish contact with the masses; especially, of course, the Muslim masses. Particularly disliked was "all the talk of hunger and poverty" which "is intended to lead the people towards socialistic and communistic ideas for which India is fa

7. *ibid.*, p. 3.9. *ibid.*, p. 7.8. *ibid.*, p. 11.10. *ibid.*, p. 15.

from prepared."¹¹

The League's next move was in the official political field. Here it scored, by persuading a majority of the Muslim members of the provincial legislatures, already elected on some other platform, to join the League. In this way the Muslim League party came to have considerable strength in the Assemblies of the four non-Congress provinces; though without dominating any one of them. In three of these provinces (Assam, Bengal, Sind) there were coalition ministries, which were unstable; in the fourth, the Punjab, the "Unionist" pseudo-coalition, which was strong. In Sind, after some vicissitudes, a Nationalist Muslim ministry held office (1939-42) supported by the Congress; a major section of the opposition became the League. In Assam, Bengal, and the Punjab, a dominant section of the government joined the League, with the premiers as Leaguers in each case. In Assam, the League coalition broke up in 1938, and a Congress coalition ministry replaced it for a year. When the Congress resigned because of the War (November 1939), the League coalition again went into office and remained there until 1941; at that time the coalition again broke up, and, as no party was then able to form a ministry, the constitution was suspended. In Bengal and the Punjab, the premiers were coalitionists first and Muslim Leaguers a poor second: Faql al-Haqq in Bengal and the late Sir Sikandar Hayat Khān in the Punjab were refractory and undependable supporters of the League and its autarchical president. They did not owe their position and power to the League; rather *vice versa*, for without these two men the League's claim to represent Muslim India would have been shakier than ever. Mr Jinnāh had publicly to chide Mr Faql al-Haqq¹² for allowing his anti-Hindu feelings to become tepid and suggesting a communal settlement. Further, this premier in September 1941 resigned from the Working Committee and Council of the League, in protest against Mr Jinnāh's dictatorial methods. Finally in December of that year he was expelled from League membership. He was able,

11. *ibid.*, p. 10.

12 For example, in correspondence released by Mr Jinnāh to the press, Bombay, 28 January 1941 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 29 January 1941).

however, to form a new ministry, and he remained premier. Similarly, in the Punjab Sir Sikandar every once in a while would denounce Pakistan as "nothing less than a misfortune for India,"¹³ and frequently denounced communalism and communalist leaders. Repeatedly the Punjab premier's divergencies from the League's policy and president threatened to issue in his breaking away from the organisation altogether, taking most of the Punjab members with him.

The fact was that the Muslim League was able to flourish only in opposition.

The attitude of the League to the foreign controllers of India was never carefully stated. In fact, the relations between the League and the British government were somewhat precarious. Usually the two supported each other, in practice if not in pretense. Without the deliberate encouragement of British imperialist policy the communalist organisations would have had little scope. British conservatives and their press were noticeably ready to champion the notion that the League did, as it claimed to do, alone represent the Muslims of India. The Viceroy would consult the League, alone among Muslim bodies. The rule that members of the Indian Civil Service were not allowed to take any part in politics was strictly enforced except when it was the politics of the Muslim League. Muslim Leaguers were chosen for important appointments. And so on. Similarly, the League tacitly supported the Empire. It was a scrupulously law-abiding movement, and did much to facilitate the British administration of the country. It was bitterly opposed to all movements actually working against the British, whether Hindu or Muslim or whatever. It became almost explicitly the sole excuse for continued British rule.

None the less, the League had interests of its own to pursue; and these, conservative and reactionary as they were, yet conflicted at times with those of the foreign imperialism. The India Office kept the League, and particularly its Pakistan, in reserve, ready to fall back upon them in actual practice as a last resource:

13. Sir Sikandar at a students' meeting, Lahore, 29 January 1941 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 3 February 1941).

but meanwhile using them principally as a threat to Congress nationalism. As long as the imperialists could keep their existing hold on the country, there was a potential divergence of interest between the government's constituency and the League's. This being so, the more powerful the League became, the more concessions it would demand—at least as a price for the very useful service that it was rendering to the British cause. It is true that the forces represented by the League needed British support from their continued existence ; it was also true that imperialism in India needed the support of those forces.

With regard to the Second World War, the Muslim League adopted no clear policy. In practice, it did nothing. It claimed late in 1940 that it had expressed its "desire from the very beginning to help in the prosecution of the war and the defence of India."¹⁴ But its offer to help was somewhat like the Congress's, only more selfish. It was on condition that the government officially recognise the League, and give it a fixed and large portion of executive power. Its emphasis was not on the war, but on these demands. The government had, of course, always been unwilling to give any Indian group much power ; nor was it willing now to define what relative power the League would get over against other bodies. On these grounds the League refused to co-operate with the Viceroy in his scheme of an enlarged Executive Council. It expelled from its own membership a knight who did join that Council,¹⁵ and made three prominent Leaguers resign from the subsidiary National Defence Council as Muslims after they had entered it as provincial premiers. It also rejected the Cripps proposals.

On the other hand, individual Leaguers supported the government in its war effort ; as they and their class supported it in general : not vigorously, nor yet only by passive acquiescence. Some of the League's prominent (i. e. rich) members were proud to be among the most lavish contributors to British war

14. From a resolution of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, September 1940, given in Sarkar, *Hindustan Year Book*, 1941, p. 464.

15. Sir Sulṭān Aḥmad ; September 1941.

funds¹⁶; and its officers from time to time made speeches in support of the war and the government's war policy.¹⁷ The League had early to issue pamphlets among students apologising for supporting recruitment to the army.¹⁸

Yet even after the character of the war had changed, even after the Japanese menace to India had become acute, the League did nothing definite, in the way of giving a lead to the people. It expressed its readiness to act; but without acting.

The League was bitterly anti-Congress. One of its chief missions was to vilify that organisation, and to identify it with the already vilified Hindus. The Congress used to ignore the League: we have noted its rejection of an alliance on the basis of communalist amendments to the Nehru Report; it again ignored it in the legislatures after the 1937 provincial elections. Soon after that time neither the Congress nor any one else in India could ignore the League, now grown momentous. Repeatedly in the last few years the Congress therefore attempted to approach it to form an anti-imperialist alliance, or at least to reach some understanding or working agreement; or at the very least to discuss their various points of view. The League persistently refused, snubbing these approaches: it irately rejected any suggestion even of discussion. It would have nothing whatever to do with the nationalist organisation.

Its method of refusal was to postulate an utterly impossible "condition," and then to adopt an air of offended generosity when this was not accepted. Its demand was that before any negotiations between Congress and League might even be begun, the Congress must constitute itself a Hindu communalist body, and must pledge itself not to recognise any Muslim organisation except the Muslim League, and not to recognise any Muslim who was not a member of the League. There was no reason

16. For example: The Nawwāb of Mamdot, "President, Punjab Muslim League, who topped the list of subscribers to the Punjab War Planes Fund" (*The Statesman*, North India edition, 11 August 1941).

17. For example, Nawwāb Bahādur Yār Jang, President, All-India States Muslim League, in a speech at Hyderabad, Deccan, 13 January 1941 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 14 January 1941).

18. (Muslim League): *Army Recruitment Bill and Muslim League Party*.

whatever why the Congress either should or could accede to this fantastic proposition—as the League well knew. Consequently the two organisations never met. The League did not offer to make any concessions, even if this condition were met : it would then be willing to meet the Congress for discussion, but it did not promise that any agreement would come out of the discussion. Actually, back in 1935, before the League's subsequent role had been assumed in its full vigour, a communal pact was reached by Jinnah and the Congress president, Rajindra Prashad. The Congress agreed to the pact ; but the League later insisted on the Hindu Mahasabha's agreeing also ; and on the grounds of the Mahasabha's non-adherence, the League was able to repudiate the whole business.

The Muslim League, then, imposed its ludicrous proposal as an absolute condition, and without its prior acceptance it utterly refused to go near the Congress. Whitehall, consequently, felt safe in postulating a prior agreement between the League and the Congress as one of their absolute conditions for discussing Indian independence. Like the League, the British adopted an air of offended generosity when this condition was not met.

As opposed to Congress nationalism, the League finally turned to demanding a partition of India.

In 1933 in Cambridge, England, a campaign was begun in favour of the idea of "Pakistan": that a separate state should be created in the area, populated principally by Muslims, of north-west India. Some persons envisaged the inclusion also of South Central Asia. Later another state in north-east India was suggested. The word "Pakistan" signifies "the country of *p-a-k*" ; which some took as being the three initials of Punjab, Afghanistan and Kashmir. Others, whose interest in lands outside of India was feeble, regarded the "*a*" as representing the Indian Afghānis, i.e. Pathans, of the North-West Frontier Province. Still others thought of *pāk*, the Persian word for "pure" or "holy".

The notion attracted little attention at first. Actually, Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl in a presidential address to the Muslim League had made a somewhat similar suggestion in 1930. "I

would like to see," he had incidentally said in the course of a long speech, "the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-Government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of North-West India."¹⁹ The idea made little impression at that time, and hardly anything was done about it until some Indian Muslim students in Cambridge, as we have said, set themselves (or were set?) to propagating it. There is some evidence²⁰ that it was the British who pressed the partition idea. In any case, after some years the idea of a separate state for Muslim India leapt into prominence in India itself, stirring the fancy of young bourgeois Muslims. Various Muslim Indians took up the suggestion, and began writing books expounding different versions of it.

Conservatives and reactionaries soon saw the propaganda value of the idea. The Muslim League authorities, toying with it, surmised correctly that it could be made a brilliantly effective tool for their purposes. Finally, at the Lahore session, 23 March 1940, the League attacked the federal constitution of the 1935

19. Iqbal, *Presidential Address to the All-India Muslim League, Allahabad Session, December 1930*, p. 10.

20. A professor of Imperial Economic Relations at London, in a book published as early as 1932 (J. Coatman, C.I.E., *Years of Destiny, India 1926-1932*) visualised the breaking up of Indian nationalism by a separate Muslim state, even suggesting a corridor from Delhi to Bengal (pp. 238 ff.). Further, the minutes of the parliamentary committee meeting in London to consider the proposed federal constitution for India show the British officials trying in 1933 to press the Pakistan idea while the Indians concerned (Muslims) could not understand why anyone would do otherwise than ignore it. See *Minutes of Evidence given before the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform (Session 1932-33)*, vol. II c, p. 1496, London (His Majesty's Stationery Office), 1934; quoted in Khan A. Ahmad, *The Founder of Pakistan*, p. 16. See further Ahmad, *op. cit.* pp. 9 ff., for quotations from sources close to British Officialdom raising the issue in 1933. Further, it has been widely believed in India that an Indian "student" at Cambridge who lavishly sponsored the Pakistan campaign, and whose means of support were not obvious, was in the pay of the India Office.

Government of India Act (everyone else had been long attacking it) and adopted the following motion : "Resolved that it is the considered view of this Session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz. that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."²¹

Before examining in detail this rather vague proposition, soon the most famous demand of the Muslim League and supposed to be the most important issue of the day in India, let us discover how much backing it had.

We have seen that in 1937 the Muslim League failed miserably at the election polls. After that time its influence grew. Undoubtedly it was soon supported by many more Muslims than the few who then voted in its favour. But how much it had grown, say, by the end of 1940 was a question for whose answer there existed no precise evidence.

In the absence of evidence, League leaders claimed that it had grown to include "all Muslims". In the absence of evidence, the British government accepted this claim. The Congress used to suggest that there were more Muslims in the Congress than in the League. The truth of this suggestion could hardly be proved, because the League refused to publish its membership figures. But it could hardly be doubted ; for the same reason.

Equally instructive was the League's resolute opposition to the proposal of a constituent assembly, elected by universal adult suffrage with separate electorates for Muslims. Apparently the leaders of the League were not at all confident that they could win a majority of the Muslim votes in an unrestricted communal franchise.

In the absence of any exact figures (the 1946 returns are not yet available) we shall proffer an estimate : that the League in 1940 was supported by virtually all the Muslim upper class, most of the Muslim upper middle class, and at least emotionally by a very sizable portion of the rest of the middle classes of the Muslims, including probably most of their youth. It was also supposed by the British government and the British upper classes, and by Hindu reactionaries.

Apropos of this last, we can cite the case of the various coalition ministries in which the League played a part. In the Punjab, for instance, the government has been an alliance of the landed interests, Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh. In the opposition have been the urban vested interests (mostly Hindu) ; and an alliance of the progressives, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh. Without the support of the Hindu conservatives, the Muslim League members could have formed no ministry. Similarly in the other provincial Assemblies : the League, for all its biting communal denunciations, was ready to co-operate with Hindu groups so long as they were not progressive or Indian-nationalist. Another instance is the League's anti-Congress "Day of Deliverance" celebration in December 1939, when the Congress ministries had resigned office : in which celebration Hindu and other communalists were invited to take part, and did so.

A revealingly large portion of Muslim League propaganda was conducted in English, the language of the top 1% of the population. A related symptom of the class nature of all such communal organisations was the importance that they attached to the script question. It was hotly debated whether the Persian or the Deva Nagari script should be used ; a question relevant obviously only to the minority of Indians (less than 10%) who are literate. For the mass of the people of India, the problem is not one of which script they shall use, but of building a society in which they and their class may read at all.

The League was relatively strongest in the parts of India where Muslims are in a minority. (These are the parts of India in which the incidence of urban and bourgeois Muslims is much the highest.)

A further point relevant to estimating the support of the Muslim League is that that support was unstable. The League's programme was vague, its policy unsettled. It could count on the allegiance of many so long as it painted ideal pictures but did not in fact do anything. As soon as it should begin to act, it was in danger of losing the support of those attracted only by its slogans. Already, over the issue of the Viceroy's Executive and National Defence Councils, it lost the following of two of the six persons concerned.²² Similarly, when it looked for a time as if Sir Sikandar was to be reprimanded by the League authorities on the same issue, a delegation of Punjab Muslim Leaguers, led by the provincial League president and supported by all but two of the League members of the provincial Assembly, was organised to assure Mr Jinnāh that their loyalties would go to Sir Sikandar and not to Mr Jinnāh in the case of a split.²³ A rather similar crisis loomed in Bengal, where the provincial League Council condemned the premier, but many of the League party in the Assembly backed him.

More important than these divisions over minor matters was the fact that in the League following there were increasingly men of a somewhat progressive bent. Even among the leaders and office-bearers there was what might be termed a left wing ; and the general following still had progressive potentialities. These men were in the League because, so far as they could see, there was no progressive alternative—now that the Congress was (1941) turning all communalist and insipid. They were held in the League by progressive-sounding slogans. But when a political crisis should arrive, and the League have to act one way or another, the allegiance of these men to the League itself might not prove sufficient to carry them with it into a clearly reactionary course. In fact, the more successful the League was in winning over the bulk of the middle classes to its fold, the greater

22. September 1941. Sir Sultān Aḥmad and Begam Shāh Nawāz did not follow the League's orders, and were expelled; Sir Sikandar Ḥayāt Khān, the Nawwāb of Chhatāri, Hon. Sir Muḥammad Sa'd Allāh, and Hon. Faḍl al-Jaqq (the last quite reluctantly) did follow them.

23. *The Statesman*, North India edition, 11 August 1941.

became the chance that it would have to act, when it did act, in the interests of those classes. If it acted not in those interests but in the purely reactionary interests of the Empire and the landlords, it might lose the very support which made it powerful.

None the less, events in Germany serve as a warning against under-estimating the possibility of whole classes of the people being misled, through a fascist ideology, by a small group of reactionaries at the top. We shall study further developments of this problem in our next section ; but in any case the final issue has not yet been faced.

The success of the propaganda carried on by the Muslim League has been the most significant process in Indian Islam of recent years. We must study that propaganda carefully. It was prolific. It was more exuberant than coherent ; so that an exact presentation is difficult. Yet its general trends are not difficult to analyse. The social background in which it was being successfully conducted is that which we sketched above for communalism in general.

An example of Muslim League adroitness is Mr Jinnāh's presidential address at the Lahore session, March 1940. It was a clever speech, indulging in all the approved methods of the type. It abounded with rhetorical questions, insinuations, flattery—to produce emotional rather than logical agreement. The hearer's feelings were played upon : his fears, his religious sense, his discontent, his pride. Sops were thrown out to the progressive : "We stand unequivocally for the freedom of India. But . . ." ²⁴—yet it was implied that only the British Raj stood between the Muslim and the most hideous exploitation.

As far as reasoning is concerned, the attempt was not so much to convince the audience of certain conclusions, as to infuse in its minds certain categories of thought, by using them to discuss points on which there could be no disagreement. Objection could hardly then be taken to the statements that he

24. Jinnah, *Presidential Address at the All-India Muslim League, Lahore Session March 1940*, as given in *India's Problem of Her Future Constitution*, p. 3.

made, but to the way that he made them. That was much more difficult, much less likely to be done. By oft-reiterated implication, he was trying to get his people into the habit of thinking of the Muslim League as equivalent to the Muslims of India; of the Congress as equivalent to the Hindus of India; of the problem that needed solving as being the conflict between the two. The critic could disagree not with the answers proffered by Mr Jinnāh, but with the questions that he asked.

The Muslim League never at any time tried to convince anybody that it represented all the Muslims of India. It assumed that it did so ; and went on to convince people of something that followed from that. In mass psychology, insinuation is more powerful than argument.

In brief, the Muslim League was creating enthusiasm for a separate Islamic state for Muslim Indians : and enthusiasm based on many things, including the engendered fear that if Muslims and Hindus lived together in the same state, and that state were independent, the Muslims would be horribly maltreated. Very little attention was given to the nature of the Pakistan that was to be ; most of the League-propaganda was negative, concerned with savagely attacking the Congress, and with stirring up as much hatred as possible between Muslims and Hindus. It said, loudly and constantly, what it did not want.

The League could, in fact, be said to have lacked any positive policy. Its demands were, above all, indefinite. Finally (1940 ff.), but vaguely, it demanded a Pakistan. But it refused to define what this meant ; even geographically. Muslims are scattered over India so pervasively that without mass migrations only a fraction of them could be united into a single territorial state, or even a group of such states, and constitute a substantial majority there. Moreover, what areas were to be included within the proposed states is an exceedingly intricate problem ; for instance, whether or not Calcutta should be included in a Muslim Bengal. Babu Rajindra Prashad issued a statement at Patna, on 16 April 1941, to the effect that the Congress would discuss the Muslim League proposition for the division of India

if the League would present the proposition in specific terms. Jinnāh contemptuously rejected this offer, saying that the "principle" of partitioning India must first be accepted by the Congress, and that then the details could be worked out ; provided always, of course, that no Muslims outside the Muslim League be consulted.²⁵

Whether or not Pakistan was to be democratic, socialist, feudal, in the British Empire, riddled with native states, and so forth, are questions which the League even more adamantly refused to answer. "Therefore," thundered a League leader, "I say to the impatient youth, be not concerned with the details of the scheme. . . . Who knows what shape Pakistan will finally take and in what form it will emerge from the turmoil of the years ?"²⁶ Who indeed ?

All possible prestige was drawn from Iqbāl and his association with the separate state idea, and from his communalism. The magnificent Iqbāl's reactionary potentialities, now that he was no longer there to refute them, were being exploited to the full. The Muslim League was not primarily religious ; but those of its devotees who were interested in the religious aspects of a separate Muslim state could find ample stimulants to their enthusiasm and imagination. We have discussed elsewhere the modern reactionary and fascist trends in the religion, especially of Iqbāl's school.²⁷

We know that a profound change has come over Islam, diverting the attention of its young devotees from heaven to earth, from piety to politics, from seventh-century Arabia to the India of to-day or to-morrow. We have said that the modern young Indian Muslim is as secular as his fellows throughout the world ; except superficially, he means by what he calls religion neither more nor less than what those fellows mean by nationalism and its like. We have been noticing also the new, psycho-

25. Rajindra Prashad's statement and Jinnāh's reply are given in *The Sunday Statesman*, Delhi, 20 April 1941.

26. Qureshi, "Pakistan : An Ideal or Practical Politics To-day ?" *Eastern Times*, Lahore, 9 August 1940, as reprinted in *India's Problem of Her Future Constitution*, p. 105.

27. See above pp. 166-82 (Part I, Chapter 4).

logically fascist, devotion of the young men to their fuhrer, their *qāid i a'zam* ("leader"). Illustrative of all these trends is the dedication of a 1942 book to the beloved Muḥammad 'Alī Jinnāh:

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,

Lend thou me on !

The night is dark and I am far from home,

Lead thou me on !

Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see,

The distant path, one step's enough for me.²⁸

(Incidentally, the use of this hymn is illustrative also of the way in which Christian influence has been absorbed into modern Islam.)

The League propaganda would catch also the enthusiasm of secularised youth. It was utterly clever, playing upon the frustration of the young middle class. Witness an article²⁹ in the *Eastern Times* : "The All-India Muslim League has placed before the Muslim youth, a great ideal. So far, the Muslims invariably lacked such a goal. Their lives were aimless." The Hindus had an ideal, Self-Government (*swarāj*) ; they all devoted themselves to it. But "Muslims, I repeat, had no ideal." The result was that they were fearful, inert, bored ; some, for lack of an ideal of their own, even supported the Hindu ideal of *swarāj* for a time. "Now all this has changed. The League has given a glorious ideal to Mussalmans. We can live for it, work for it, dream of it, and above all, die for it—die for it, so that a rejuvenated, regenerated, renovated and triumphant Islam may once again raise its head in this land of ours and live an honourable and peaceful life." As propaganda, this is brilliant ; this offered what the people, psychologically, needed.

Normally, Pakistan devotees would feed their enthusiasm on the horrors that they would suffer if Muslim India were not separate from the rest. When they did indulge in dreams of the glorious alternative, their own free, flourishing Pakistan, they had before them no precise definitions or exact programmes to confine their fancies. Each, therefore, would paint the future in

28. Mohammad Noman, *Muslim India*, p. 5.

29. Qureshi, loc. cit., p. 106.

the colours most attractive to himself, and draw from the resultant picture the enthusiasm of the convert. The orthodox among them naturally would envisage a state reproducing pristine Islam, a community living in wondrous devotion, in everything according to the Qur'ān and the Canon Law, and richly blessed by God for perfect following of duty. The unemployed clerk would think of the job that he would get, and the rapid promotions; for no Muslim, at least not himself, would go without splendid recognition. The bourgeois would gloat over the prospect of protected fields of investment, protected trade, lavish government patronage, and the elimination by law of the Hindu bourgeois's competition. The landlord would look forward to the restitution of untrammelled feudalism, the good old days when he was top dog; and would delight to think of nipping in the bud this nascent capitalism of the south and of the Hindu that had recently come to disrupt his society and to displace himself.

Economically, the devotees would feel vaguely that the League was working for some kind of Muslim mass uplift; and, less vaguely, that it was working for Muslim industries, Muslim banks, Muslim shops, etc. Typical answers of young Aligarh students to questions on the League's economic policy are: "The League has appointed a committee . . ."; ". . . a sort of socialist state . . ."; "Islamic socialism"; "The Muslims of India are not peasants, but urban: almost wholly urban. . ."³⁰

The vague but roseate hints offered to the poor and the exploited of the glories that would be theirs once they lived in a state in which Muslims were in the majority, did not, of course, convince the lower classes. But they did let the bourgeois feel that the poor were being cared for.

The picture painted by the young Pakistan enthusiast of a separate, free, and grandiose Muslim India bore little or no resemblance to such self-determining "Muslim" states as do, in fact, exist at the present day—Egypt, Turkey, Iraq. . . This lack of resemblance, however, seems never to have occurred to

30. To the present writer, at the Muslim University, Aligarh, 26 March 1941.

him. In any case, it disturbed him not at all.

The Muslim League thrived on attack. It was anti-Hindu, anti-Congress, anti-"one free India". It attacked the Hindus with fervour, fear, contempt, and bitter hatred. It would seek out, air, and emphasise the differences between the two communities: cultural, social, religious, and every other difference on which it could lay its hands. One writer admitted that "their mutual differences . . . are not felt at present as acutely as they should"³¹; such an unfortunate state of affairs, however, has been quickly disappearing under the efforts of himself and others in the League. As Germans hate Jews, so Muslims have hated Hindus.

The attack on the Congress was closely related. In 1938 the League issued the "Pirpur Report"³² on atrocities suffered by Muslims at the pitiless hands of Congress provincial governments. On 12 December 1939, when those governments had relinquished office in protest about India's treatment in the war, the League, supported by other communalists, celebrated a "Day of Deliverance" in the towns of India. In presidential and other speeches, the League would spend a good deal of its time and most of its invective in traducing the Congress.

The Pirpur Report created a furore among many Muslims. Actually, some of the "atrocities" of which it complained were flagrantly silly—for example, that the Congress government in various provinces had lifted the ban, previously imposed by the British, on the singing of the nationalist anthem *Bande Mataram* and the use of the nationalist tricolour. Some were simply accounts from the Muslim point of view of the Muslim side of such communal riots as had occurred in provinces with Congress governments and in the years since those governments took office. Some were mild "injustices" which could hardly be grievances to the reasonable—for example, that in the Central Provinces (where Muslims are 4% of the population; how

31. "Punjabi", *Confederacy of India*, p. 151, in a quotation given in Rajendra Prasad, *Pakistan*, p. 13.

32. *Report of the Inquiry Committee appointed by the Council of the All-India Muslim League to inquire into Muslim grievances in Congress Provinces*, President: Raja Syed Mohammad Mehdi of Pirpur.

many of these are literate in Urdu is not mentioned), speeches in the Assembly were allowed in Urdu but were recorded in Hindi or English. Some were statements of governmental partiality between the two communities, and of Muslim disabilities (especially relating to dealings in meat), which, if true, merited serious inquiry and adjustment.

An outsider who read the report would wish to hear the other side of the case. But no doubt an inflammable partisan was goaded, particularly by the implicit insinuations and the screaming, heavy-type headlines, to resentment and fury.

The report repeatedly stated explicitly that the Muslims were in a worse case under the Congress than under the British. The savage and irrational attacks on the nationalist flag, on the nationalist song, and, above all, on the theologues-supported "Muslim mass contact" movement of the Congress, are not really surprising when one remembers that the chairman of the Pirpur committee was the ruler of a native state.

The anti-Congress campaign was one of utmost defamation. The following is typical language used by the League: "... let loose the steam-roller of Congress tyranny to grind down and crush the Muslims . . ." ³³; "The Congress would . . . stoop so low as to enter into a tacit agreement with a foreign imperialistic power . . . to harass and persecute the Muslims and reduce them to the position of serfs" ³⁴; "The real motive behind Congress opposition to the Recruitment Bills is to reduce the Muslim strength in the army" ³⁵; "The Hindu is racially deadlier and subtler than the Jews. The Hindu Fascism after establishing itself in India as the sole power will embark upon a career of economic imperialism for the strangulation of the Muslim countries by a scientific organisation of an irresistible [*sic*] war machine backed up by a gigantic financial and industrial system which can easily beat both the Jew and the Japanese. It will be a bitterly anti-Muslim power pledged to a total war on Muslim

33. Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, *Muslim India and Its Goal*, p. 12.

34. *ibid.*

35. (Muslim League): *Army Recruitment Bill and Muslim League Party*, p. 7.

lands and peoples."³⁶

The Congress was attacked not only as an anti-Muslim fiend. It was ridiculed also for its nationalist timidity. One fundamental reason why the League was able to win over the Muslim youth and petty bourgeois from Congress nationalism, is that the Congress was not radical enough. The Congress had fought two vast anti-British campaigns; and both times, from the point of view of anyone but the *haute* bourgeoisie, it had failed. It is a bourgeois organisation, and however progressive it may seem, in a crisis it has always acted for the bourgeois. Muslim Leaguers were convinced that "the Hindus," meaning the Congress, did not really want Indian independence, whatever they might say. As evidence they cited Gandhi's own writings, the collapse of the Civil Disobedience and Non-Co-operation movements; the intimacy between the Congress and the millowners; above all, the ludicrous and petty anti-war gestures of the anaemic *satyagraha* of 1940-1, followed by do-nothing indecision. The movements of 1920 and 1930, they said, would not have had even what success they did have had it not been for the Muslim element in them. Only the Muslims, they boasted, are fighters. The Muslims alone have been radical: for instance, the Khilafat committee was more aggressive than the Congress committee in 1920. The Hindus, they went on, want British bayonets to protect them from the Muslims. Complete independence was first announced from a Congress platform by a Muslim (at Madras, 1927); then the Hindus reverted to mere dominion status (Nehru Report).

There was, of course, some truth at the basis of this attitude; a truth which was distorted by being put in communal instead of class terms. For example, the statement that the Hindus wanted British protection from Muslims is a rewording of the fact that the industrialists, and bourgeoisie generally, wanted protection from the militant proletariat and peasantry. The Congress, representing the former groups, could not, there-

36 From an address presented by the Punjab Muslim Students' Federation to a delegation of Turkish journalists, Lahore, 25 January 1943. The original is with the present writer.

fore, retain the allegiance of the dispossessed, nor of the student class. Muslim educated youth by 1941 was divided into only two main groups. Those who were not socialists joined the Muslim League.

If the Hindus, with the little power that they were given in provincial governments, could wreak such horror on the helpless Muslims, what they would inflict in an independent India might well be imagined. Helps to imagining it were profusely distributed by the League. It was suggested that in a united India the strong, even ferocious, Hindu-dominated centre, in its policy of crushing or exterminating Islam, would impose upon the Muslims a foreign language, an alien and caste-ridden social system, an infidel and rather barbarous culture; and of course would place "foreigners" in charge of administering these evils, and in all posts of authority. They foresaw a craftily designed education, from which all Muslim history and Muslim ideals had of course been banished, gradually weaning their children from true religion and indoctrinating them with the fatuous principles of despised Hinduism. The more romantic then proceeded to imagine that among the first acts of the new government would be laws encouraging music before every mosque—there was no limit to the loudness and piercing disturbance of this imagined noise. In the end they pictured themselves all debilitated by enforced effeminate vegetarianism and disintegrated by imposed defeatist *ahimsa* (non-violence, "non-defence"); and bowing down to worship dirt and stones, while the mangy "sacred" execrated cow marched in triumph over the prostrate land.

The threat that was brandished with the greatest of horror was the economic. Herein stands out most clearly the fact that the League was exploiting capitalist discontent in India for communalist ends. The appeal was always to the economically dissatisfied. Mussalmans all over India are numerically in a minority and weak, educationally backward, and economically nowhere."³⁷ "The proposed separation will undoubtedly lead to our

37. Jinnah, *Presidential Address, All-India Muslim League, Lucknow Session, October 1937*, p. 2.

emancipation from the economic slavery of the Hindus,"³⁸ "Economically, too, there is a clash between Hindu and Muslim interests. . . . In villages which lie in pure Muslim surroundings, the Hindu holds a favoured position as a money-lender or shop-keeper. The Muslim middle class in cities has no choice left except to work as labourers or to seek petty jobs in Government service. The Hindu middle class is prosperous and flourishing and controls all the . . . trade of the country."³⁹ "The interests of the Muslim peasant as well as of the Muslim middle class man in the city directly clash with those of the Hindu money-lender and the shop-keeper."⁴⁰ "All the economic bourses, the bloated usurers, industrial magnates and capitalists in the country are all Hindus."⁴¹

It would be idle to deny that the Muslims of India had pitiable grievances, that they were exploited and harassed. The question was whether the League's programme was calculated to bring a solution of their ills.

We may enumerate a few of the objections to the League's policy. For one thing, there were many psychological aspects that were most unsound, and not unimportant. We have already said that the movement was negative, and was based on hatred and fear, rather than having a constructive programme and an exact positive ideal. Its hatred and fear motivation made it unhealthy. Many of the enthusiasts were emotionally, even mentally, unbalanced. Even the leaders wrote irrationally. Instead of deliberate discussion, there was among the rank and file a fanaticism, a fascist and blind devotion to the leader, and an irascible certitude that in places like the Aligarh University approached hysteria. During the Chamberlain regime there appeared irresponsible statements such as these, reminiscent of

38. "Punjabi," op. cit., quoted in Rajendra Prasad, op. cit., p. 16.

39. "M.R.T.," "Protection Versus Separation," *Eastern Times*, Lahore, 5 January 1940, as reprinted in *India's Problem of Her Future Constitution*, pp. 35-6.

40. *ibid.*, p. 37.

41. Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, "Is India One Nation?" in *India's Problem of Her Future Constitution*, p. 134.

German national socialist cries : "Pundit Jawaharlal's visits to England and other countries in Europe have been cleverly stage-managed by Leftist groups supported by prominent publicity through the Jewish press Reuter"⁴² ; the Congress's "final objective, viz establishment of Hindu supremacy under British protection in complicity with Bolshevik Russia and other communist agencies."⁴³ In Sind, "The Hindus will have to be eradicated like the Jews in Germany if they did not behave properly."⁴⁴ Once Pakistan were achieved, the minority problem would presumably evaporate ; for "the record of Muslims all over the world is a shining example of how to deal with minorities under one's charge. . . . The Muslims have got it in their blood to be not only just and fair but also generous when they are in power."⁴⁵ They have persuaded only themselves of this reputed magnanimity : other communities have been much afraid. When, in 1942, the daughter of a prominent (and nationalist) Muslim chose to marry a non-Muslim officer in the Indian Air Force, the following was among the comments appearing in the Pakistani press : "If the criminal law of Islam be established" in India, "such sensualists who, for the gratification of their own carnal appetites, trample on the law of God and Islamic honour, will be, as a warning to others, publicly stoned to death and their dead bodies will be thrown in the field to feed the kites and crows. But now, when we are ruled by an infidel government, everybody has 'freedom' to do and say as he pleases, and our helplessness is so extreme that we cannot even turn out these hypocrites and vipers from Islam and Muslim society."⁴⁶

Leaguers had a religious conviction, which absolved them

42. (Muslim League) *Army Recruitment Bill and Muslim League Party*, p. 4.

43. *ibid.*, p. 5.

44. M. H. Gazdar, at a Muslim League meeting at Karachi, 8 March 1941, as reported in *The Tribune*, Lahore, 10 March 1941.

45. Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, *Muslim India and Its Goal*, p. 40.

46. Translated from *Al-Furqān*, Bareilly, vol. 9, triple-no. 3-4-5 (Rabī' al-Awwal to Jumādī l-ūlā 1361), p. 16. Attention was called to this passage by J. A. Subhan, in a note in *The Bulletin of the Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies*, Series XXX (New Form), Nov-Dec 1942, pp. 9 ff. ⁴⁶

from rational thought and from meeting rational criticism. By saying that "Islam is so different," they released themselves from the duty of learning anything from history, from the West, from modern sociology. By feeling that outsiders simply did not understand Islam and the Muslims, they avoided the duty of listening tolerantly to objections raised by foreigners, by Hindus—and even by nationalist Muslims, whom they called "renegades from Islam". In fact, they enjoyed being misunderstood ; it seemed to them to prove their point. Whatever else it might be, Pakistanism was unlovely.

In addition, one could bring many logical objections against the League programme. The principal self-contradiction lay in the fact that the Pakistan scheme would not solve the "problem" of communal minorities at all, on the necessity of whose solution the whole scheme was said to depend. There have been many suggestions as to how India should be divided up, for the sake of the Muslims ; all but one have this in common, that they would leave almost as many persons in communal minorities as there are now. The one exception was the proposal of Sayyid 'Abd al-Laṭīf of 'Uthmāniyah University, involving mass exchange of populations for tens of millions of persons. This was so utterly impracticable that even its author subsequently rescinded the suggestion and favoured a federal constitution. Unless whole populations were to be migrated *en masse*, the fact is that adherents of the various religions are distributed throughout the territory of India in such a way that no geographical lines can be drawn to separate the communities into distinct areas. One could, if one liked, visualise the division of India into units in some of which the members of one community would be in a numerical majority, and in others the members of another. But in each unit there would still be communal minorities, of large enough numbers in each case to add up throughout the country to almost the same figure as that of total communal minorities now. In other words, the division would merely reproduce on a smaller but more prolific scale the very problem which it claimed to set out to solve.

In so doing it would, it is true, reverse the proportions in

some cases. The League maintains that even if there must be tens of millions of Indians belonging to a minority religion, there is no reason why all of them should be Muslims.

The scheme that did most for reducing the total figure of communal minorities was "Punjabi" 's *Confederacy of India*⁴⁷; it would leave 58·6 millions, of whom 29 millions would be Muslims. The Aligarh scheme (of Zafar al-Hasan and Qadiri⁴⁸) would leave about 70 millions, of whom 28·1 millions would be Muslims. In an undivided India, there were 79·3 millions in the communal minority of the Muslims.⁴⁹ (All these figures were calculated from the 1931 census.) What these proposals would achieve, therefore, is not the partition of India along communal lines, but the redistribution of communal minorities and majorities. The schemes would reduce the number of Muslims in Hindu-majority states even this much, however, only by spreading Muslims very thinly over their own states: the *Confederacy of India* would create as a separate state a "Muslim" Bengal Federation with a Muslim population of 66·1%; the Aligarh scheme visualises Pakistan with 60·3% Muslims, and "Bengal" with 57%. The logic of the situation becomes ridiculous. If Muslims in the present India, constituting a minority of 23·5%, deserve the right to secede, how can one visualise a Pakistan with non-Muslim minorities of 40% and more? Surely the Pakistani ought to be the first to let those minorities secede, back to "Hindu" India.

It is small wonder that Mr Jinnāh irately refused to discuss the details of his plan with the Congress.

There are further important criticisms to make of Muslim League policy, of quite another category: criticisms bearing on the political and economic context in which that policy was being carried on. Whatever might or might not be the merits of a Pakistan, yet under the then circumstances, and given the

47. Calculations based on figures in Rajendra Prasad, op. cit.

48. Syed Zafarul Hasan and Mohammad Afzal Husain Qadri, *The Problem of Indian Muslims and Its Solution*. Figures in Table in Appendix.

49. Figure from the 1931 census, adjusted so as to omit Burma, no longer a part of India, and also to take account of note no. 2 on, p. 513, vol. I, part 2, *Census of India, 1931*.

methods being used by the League, to support the League and its policy was definitely reactionary. Politically, the supreme question facing India in all its parts was the question of freedom from foreign domination. Without that freedom, all other questions including that of Pakistan, must remain (as they did remain) unanswered. And to support the Muslim League was in fact to work against that freedom. The League persistently refused to take steps for the overthrow of imperialism; and the more following it could muster, the easier it was for the British to hang on.

There is a significant parallel between this Muslim attitude and that of Indian nationalism *vis-à-vis* the Second World War. Without the defeat of fascism, there would have been no freedom in the world at all, for India or anyone. Indian nationalists knew this, and repeatedly expressed their anti-fascist sympathies; but since India itself was neither given nor effectively promised independence, they could not join the world fight for freedom. Apparently one may induce this generalisation, empirically if not logically valid: that a subject nation, even in order to avert a certain perpetuation or even worsening of its own enslavement, will not help a dominant group to fight for liberation, unless that subject nation can positively foresee its own specific salvation.

Of course, the League would have got no following at all in India (as the Liberal Party got none sometime ago) if it had not at least pretended to be anti-British. After 1937 it did so pretend, but rather feebly. Even its talk about independence was hedged about with caution. "This is the way to achieve India's freedom in the quickest possible time . . . but it does not rule out continuation of relations with Great Britain with necessary adjustments."⁵⁰ The general form of statements issued by League leaders was: "We want independence for India, but. . . ." The fact is that the League was not actually working for Indian independence.

"Neither is the Congress," was the reply of ardent Leaguers; which was true.

50. Jinnāh, in his preface to *India's Problem of Her Future Constitution*.

Socially, the Muslim League was thoroughly reactionary. This is most clearly proved in that all the proposed Pakistan schemes, however much they might otherwise differ, had this in common : that they contemplated leaving the native states practically as they are. In fact, the League was explicitly in sympathy with the *status quo* in Hyderabad. Now the native states of India have some of the most backward forms of government in the world; whoever upholds them stands self-condemned.

The fact that the reactionary classes of Indian Islam supported the League is further evidence of its obstructiveness. Virtually all Muslim landlords, native princes, wealthy professionals, favoured it. Devotees naturally explained this away by saying that there is no class struggle in Islam, and that it was pure religious devotion which brought these stalwarts to back Islam's "progressive" communal movement. It did not, however, bring them to back any other Muslim movement, such as that advocated by the clergy. One can notice, moreover, that the religious devotion of landlords stopped short when it might affect their property. For example, they lauded the Canon Law in principle ; but when it came to a question of whether or not they would share the inheritance with their sisters, they preferred the infidel's system. The Muslim Personal Law (Shari'at) Application Act, No. XXVI of 1937, does not apply to agricultural land.

To sum up. The Muslim League for several years after its reformation in the mid-1930's made use of a virtually fascist ideology, with which it caught the aggressive frenzy and religious bigotry of the constricted middle classes. It was supported, more coolly, by the reactionaries of Britain and India. In objective fact its policy led to a frustration of the Indian nationalist movement, and to a continuation during that period of the political *status quo*. It led also to a confusion of social issues in India and to a continuation of the economic *status quo*.

Religiously, it is interesting as an illustration of the point that in a time of social crisis, middle-class and upper-class religion will lend itself with wholehearted enthusiasm to the cause of reaction.

During the same period there was, it is true, a growing group within the League with more progressive ambitions : a group who were anti-imperialist as well as anti-Congress. But this group was not able to dominate, or even much to influence, the League. Similarly, as the movement grew to include also the masses of the people, there was of course a strengthening of the socially progressive trends. We shall turn to study these briefly in a new section. Meanwhile we repeat that during these years it was the reactionaries who controlled the policy, and the reactionaries who benefited.

The Most Recent Phase : 1942 ff.

The Muslim League, though dominated by the reactionaries, was able presently to attract to its following practically the entire Muslim middle class, including the progressive sections ; and then busied itself attracting also the Muslim lower classes. In the process, it has been transforming itself. It has become the organ of an Indian Muslims' national movement. The reactionaries have been losing their dominance, and the League, like any national movement, has been experiencing struggles for leadership within it of the various national forces. The most significant change, in some ways the most significant process in recent Indian history, has been the widespread mighty awakening of the Muslims of India, under the League ; to a new life, and to a consciousness of themselves as a separate people, with a powerful determination and programme of their own.

This rise of a separate nationalist movement within India, distinct from and partly opposed to Indian nationalism, has shocked many observers and confused many. It has intensely irritated and even blinded Congressmen, who have a sixty-year tradition that nationalism in India is an undivided movement, led by them in one organisation, the Congress. It has baffled sympathetic foreigners, especially the Left Wing in England, to whom communalism in India has seemed reactionary and who have seen insistence upon it as a device for keeping all Indians in subjection. The fact that this new nationalism has adopted as its political organ that previously reactionary body, the Muslim League, has encouraged both Indian nationalists and the world's

liberals to avoid recognising it as progressive, powerful, and new. But while it has brought consternation to outsiders, and seemingly slowed for more than a moment the freedom movement for all India, yet to Muslims within it it has brought unprecedented hope and vitality, and for them has meant a promise of much greater freedom, in fact for them has proved itself the only form in which freedom in India has meaning.

The first fact to face is the virtual collapse by about 1942 of non-communal Indian nationalism. We have already examined the rise and fall of the Muslims' energetic participation in the Indian nationalist movement. The Congress Muslims, once a mighty power, had lost political importance. Of the various individuals who led them, some had switched to Muslim nationalism (League offices have been dotted with ex-Congressmen); some, like Āzād, had remained important but not so representative; others had sunk into oblivion. The Ahrār party had abandoned progress altogether, and almost disintegrated in the process. The Khudā'ī Khidmatgārs were still with the Congress; but their provincial Congress was "in full agreement" ⁵¹ with Rajagopalacharya on the issue of conceding Pakistan. In bye-elections the next year (1943) it lost some support to League candidates who not only admitted Pakistan but positively glorified it. The theologues of the *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā'* were as anti-British as ever; yet at their 1942 conference instead of attacking the League in their old style, they hoped for Muslim solidarity, and their resolution demanding complete independence for India asked also for a federal constitution "such as would secure religious, political, and cultural self-determination for Muslims."⁵² The Āzād Muslim Board still made statements for Indian freedom, but envisaged within that freedom the right of secession.⁵³

By the close of 1942, then, there was no substantial organised group of Muslims opposed to the League's policy of separat-

51. Khān 'Alī Gul Khān, president, Frontier Provincial Congress Committee, in an interview to the press, Peshawar, 8 May 1942 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 9 May 1942).

52. From the resolution of the Lahore conference of the *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā'*, 21 March 1942 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 22 March 1942).

53. See above, p. 280, at reference 26.

ism. And the only two important Muslim bodies politically opposed to the League itself were in fact more sectional still : the Khudā'i Khidmatgārs and the Kashmir National Conference. These organisations were not against Pakistan. They comprised people who were not superseding Muslim nationalism in a larger, Indian, nationalism ; on the contrary, were undercutting it in still smaller, more local loyalties. They expressed, basically, Pathan and Kashmiri nationalism respectively.

And if this was the situation in 1942, it has developed still further since that date. While the League itself has grown, the non-League Muslim bodies have seconded with increasing clarity the demand for the Muslim areas' right of separation. The Krishak Praja party and the *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā'* have both envisaged a voluntary federation of autonomous provinces.⁵⁴ In 1944, the Kashmir National Conference demanded an entirely separate and independent Kashmir people's state. (In fact, the multinationalism of India has seemed to be developing apace. The Muslim League will have as much difficulty in coming to terms with the vigorously independent Pathan and Kashmiri movements—on the basis of their autonomous self-determination within Pakistan—as the Congress has been having with the League. Similarly within the Muslim League itself : the Sind Muslim League—which is the most popular of the provincial League groups, has gone furthest in its contact with the masses—has seemed to be moving towards a demand for self-determination, and has launched the slogan "Sind for the Sindhīs."⁵⁵)

In 1945, even the Muslim Majlis, representing all Congress and non-League Muslims, urged in its memorandum to the

54. For the Krishak Praja party : "The Movement now envisages as its objective a socialist Indian State based on the voluntary and free union of completely autonomous territorial units"—Humayun Kabir, "Among the Bengal Peasants," in *The Hindustan Times Weekly*, New Delhi, 20 May 1945 (referring to new policy adopted "in 1943"). For the *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā'*, see below, reference 9 to Part III

55. From the "programme of the newly elected Provincial Muslim League" as explained by "S. M. Sayyid" [sc. G. M. Sayyid] and Shaykh 'Abd al-Majid, presidents of the Sind Provincial Muslim League and the Committee of Action, respectively (*Dawn*, Delhi, Late Dak edition, 10 June 1945.)

Sapru Committee that they "concede the right of Self-Determination on territorial basis."⁵⁶

Few, in fact, denied that the growing popularity of the Muslim League since 1937 had continued unabated. In most of the Muslim bye-elections held between the provincial elections of that year (at which the League had done so poorly) and the end of 1944, League candidates had been returned. The League could, if it wished, lead a mass movement of the Indian Muslims, virtually unanimous. It was becoming a people's party.⁵⁷

Progressives throughout India, of whatever creed, began to realise, in some cases painfully, that progress and freedom for India could be achieved no longer through simple Congress nationalism; but only through a united front of the Congress and the League. (The only exception to the latter have been the followers of M.N. Roy. His much maligned and little influential Radical Democratic Party has rejected both the Congress and the League.) The objective of a Congress-League agreement was therefore adopted by the Communists (whose chief plank it now became) and even by non-League Muslims (comprehended in the Indian-nationalist Muslim Majlis⁵⁸); as well as by the progressive sections within both the Congress and the League.

Opposition, on the other hand, to the Pakistan idea and to a Congress-League pact now came from the reactionaries. First, the India Office authorities who some years before had been fostering the League to counter Congress nationalism, began to realise that the situation was getting out of hand. From 1942, they prohibited negotiations between the two bodies as long as they could⁵⁹; and began to announce, after years of dividing

56. From the memorandum of the Muslim Majlis to the Sapru Committee to frame a new constitution for India; submitted in March 1945 (*Dawn*, Delhi, Late Dak edition, 28 April 1945).

57. In the 1946 elections to the Central Assembly, the League won every single Muslim seat.

58. See above, pp. 280-1, at references 28 to 31.

59. Towards the end of 1942, C. Rajagopalacharya, able apostle of Congress-League agreement, was able to convince himself, after interviewing Jinnāh, that there was a "reasonable chance" of a settlement. The British government, however, shamelessly refused to allow him to see Gandhi. (See *The Tribune*, Lahore, 13 November 1942).

and ruling, that they were unfavourable to separatisms. At the end of 1942 the viceroy (Linlithgow) emphasised India's geographical unity, and stated that it was now even more important than in the past "that we should seek to conserve that unity"⁶⁰; similarly the new viceroy (Wavell) in his first speech to the Central Legislature, declared that the desire of His Majesty's government was, and doubtless of future governments would be, "to see India . . . a united country. . . . You cannot alter geography. . . . India is a natural unit," and so on.⁶¹ This official point of view has been reiterated subsequently.

Among Indians, in the same way, it was the reactionaries who have become opponents of Pakistan and Congress-League unity. The Mahasabha, political and religious right-wing of the Hindus, no longer supported the League, but bitterly attacked it, and virulently led the opposition within the Congress. The big business interests—"Hindu" monopoly capitalism—have been opposed to making concessions, while the man in the street shrugged his shoulders, and thought, if the Muslims want a separate state, let them have it, only let us get on with a freedom programme. Within the League, too, the feudal lords have been anti-Hindu; and have begun to fear the rising new leadership which has threatened to replace them and which is anti-British. (Within the League there is also another group which, though not reactionary in a final sense, has been adverse to a Congress-League pact prematurely, since it has felt that, by waiting, the League's position, and hence its bargaining power, would continue to be gradually strengthened. This is the upper Muslim bourgeoisie; we shall return to it presently.) In fact, as we shall see, the 1944 Gandhi-Jinnāh talks broke down partly because of the environment provided by British imperialism; and partly because of the extent to which both Gandhi and Jinnāh were under the influence of the conservative groups within each

60. In his speech at the Associated Chambers of Commerce annual meeting, Calcutta, 17 December 1942 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 18 December 1942)—less than a week after the incident referred to in the preceding reference.

61. *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, Dak edition, 18 February 1944. He went on to cite instances of two or more nationalities living together happily in one state (Switzerland, Canada), and urged India to do the same.

organisation.

The League has become a Muslim-nationalist organisation first by the adherence to it of the Muslim bourgeoisie and more recently by the adherence of peasants. Let us examine each of these in turn. The middle classes came to the League for many reasons. First, there were the psychological conditions which we have outlined: the appeal to the frustrated for aggressive group solidarity—a distressingly common phenomenon in our collapsing world order. This factor remained of extreme importance; and for Muslims living outside the Pakistan area, it remained perhaps the chief consideration. Secondly, we have already emphasised the lack of progressive alternative to the League; the 1937-41 failure of the Congress to attract, or to keep attracted, the discontented, its policy almost calculated to alienate all but the big industrialists. Thirdly, the Muslim bourgeoisie was attracted to the League even while the League's activities were obstructive and reactionary, partly because it was itself, being bourgeois, interested in reaction. Like the Congress middle classes, it was afraid of revolution; afraid of the masses and communism in the event of a breakdown of the imperialist *status quo*. We have seen Jinnāh's appealing to the Muslim middle classes to join the League lest the nationalists lead India to socialism.⁶² But finally, and increasingly important, the Muslim middle classes have joined the League because they have seen in it an opportunity for increased middle-class advantage for themselves; and opportunity for their class aggrandizement, for wealth, power, culture and freedom to exploit.⁶³

It might be asked whether the interests of the Muslim bourgeois as a bourgeois is not the same as that of the Hindu. For instance, Nawwāb Sir Liyāqat Hayāt Khān, brother of a late Muslim premier, is a director of the "Hindu" capitalists' new venture, the big Bharat Bank.⁶⁴ But in Europe from before the First World War there were some Frenchmen on the directorates of German monopolies and *vice versa*; and during the nineteenth

62. See above, p. 303, at reference 11.

63. Compare above, pp. 223 ff.

64. The Board of Directors of the Bharat Bank is given in an announcement in *The Tribune*, Lahore, 14 January 1943.

century there arose also a European myth that capitalist economics would lead to international unification.⁶⁵ The plausibility of this myth persisted only so long as one bourgeoisie remained in unchallenged economic supremacy : it was British liberalism that most firmly believed that international free-trade and world capitalist *laissez-faire* would eventuate in universal peace and harmony. The actual outcome, as we know, was far different : the further capitalism developed, the more violent were the antagonisms that it fostered. Similarly in India : as long as that bourgeoisie with a big head-start was alone important, the rise of industrial capitalism seemed to herald unity ; but in fact it has led to an almost European rivalry and conflict.

Middle-class Muslims realised one after another that their chance of middle-class success, pitifully meagre in the present order and, as individuals', none too bright even in a free capitalist India, could be immensely increased if they would stand together as a corporate Muslim middle class and fight for power. If Pakistan were achieved, they would have an opportunity of investing their money, of dominating commerce, the professions, and government service, of raising tariffs to foster their own industries, and so on. The fact that Pakistan would not solve communalism for the mass of the people is thus irrelevant. They have said that Muslims and Hindus are so different that they cannot live together in one state. What they have meant is that the Muslim bourgeoisie and the "Hindu" bourgeoisie are so competitive that they cannot both own the banks and industries, run the commerce, do the professional and other jobs, in one capitalist state.

We see now why they were not bothered by the fact that the mass of the population of their Pakistan would still be 40% Hindu or Sikh.

And even apart from achieving Pakistan as an actuality, it seemed to them in their interests to strive, through the Muslim League, for power. By the League's obstructionist tactics, its very intransigence and its slogans' clamour, it has aimed at

65. Compare the chapter "The Myth of 'International' Capitalism" in Palme Dutt, *World Politics 1918-1936*.

driving a hard bargain with the Congress leadership, or with the British; to wring concessions and privileges and bourgeois opportunities. The Muslim bourgeoisie has been patient with the League's lack of positive achievement, because it has known that it is weak but growing; and therefore may well wait before it makes its bargain. The dogmatic refusal even to negotiate with the Congress (1937-42), the failure to achieve a settlement once negotiations became necessary (1944), were tolerated even by the progressive middle-class Muslims because they were convinced that in due course the League would become stronger and thus get an even better settlement. The feudal element did not want a settlement; the bourgeois elements did not want a settlement yet. Similarly, though anti-imperialist, they tolerated an alliance in the provincial legislatures with the feudal lords and the British, as a device for strengthening their organisational machinery. Even the young idealists, whose passion for Pakistan is fervid, have been none the less readily acquiescent in the League's postponement of decisive action.⁶⁶ (This acquiescence has infuriated and alienated the uncomprehending idealists of other communities.)

Bringing also Muslim peasants under the influence of the League has been a remarkable achievement, and one entirely of the years since 1942. By the end of 1944 the Bengal Muslim League claimed half a million members, enabling its young left-wing secretary proudly to call it "the biggest political body that Bengal has ever seen."⁶⁷ For Sind and the Punjab, the figure claimed was nearly 200,000 each.⁶⁸ The peasants have been turning enthusiastic for Muslim solidarity, Hindu-Muslim group co-operation, and economic cultural progress. When they have heard their immediate peasant demands being

66. For instance, the usually explosive Jamil al-Dīn Aḥmad: "It was not practicable to build a new and complete constitutional scheme for India during the period of the war" (*Through Pakistan to Freedom*, p. 55). Similarly, Z. A. Suleri, "The Muslim League was well content not to press its demand during the war" (*The Road to Peace and Pakistan*, p. 117) (*italics ours*).

67. Abul Ḥāshim, in his annual report to the Council meeting, Calcutta 17 November 1944 (*People's War*, Bombay, 3 December 1944).

68. *People's War*, Bombay, 4 March 1945.

voiced in Muslim terms, and their anti-imperialist aspirations in terms of a Congress-League united front, they have shown themselves ready for action. The new ideology of Muslim nationalism, not against the Hindus but as a community along with the Hindus, has liberated a new energy and given promise of engendering a new culture. Of the individuals who have built up and been leading these peasant movements, progressives within the League, a number have been ex-communists. They have discovered that a synthesis of religio-nationalist and secular appeals is a potent force, where a purely profane socialist programme failed to win response.

Similarly to the intellectual and the idealist has come an unprecedented inspiration from the appeal to serve a community which they feel is their own, the appeal to work for the regeneration of Islam so that its people may climb to new heights of grandeur and its values re-expressed in new concrete achievements. This appeal has synthesised for them—into one call of duty that is also a glorious promise of salvation—their religion, to whose tradition they are proudly and profoundly sensitive, and their twentieth-century environment, whose opportunities they are longing to realise.

The Muslim League, then, has been becoming the organ of a surging nationalism; at its centre a hard core of business interests intent on power, but beginning to be supported also by an awakening peasantry, and surrounded by nationalism's complete paraphernalia, of poetry and a whole cultural renaissance, of youthful idealism and open-hearted devotion.

Naturally, the character of the League itself has changed in the process. During 1942-3 there emerged a new emphasis on trade ("Buy from Muslims!"⁶⁹), on investment, and on education (including "technical and industrial education"⁷⁰). Financial support began to be expected, and solicited, from industri-

69. In Sind, this slogan was launched by the provincial Muslim League under G.M. Sayyid. For protests against it by the provincial Hindu Sabha, see *The Tribune*, Lahore, 26 August 1943.

70. From a speech by Jinnah at Agra, 24 October 1942 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 26 October 1942).

alists more than from landlords.⁷¹ The important stimulant to capitalism in India given by the Second World War is to be remembered here. Along with this, the League began to abandon its purely negative role, of attacking others, and to develop a positive, even a progressive, programme. There was more and more questioning about the *kind* of Pakistan to be achieved; and the answers to this were decreasingly utopian, theocratic, or "back to the good old days". Jinnāh in his 1943 presidential address referred to the "suggestions and proposals" with which Leaguers were bombarding him: "I am asked why the Muslim League should not establish a complete machinery and bureau to set up national industries for Muslim India. . . . Why should we not undertake planning? Why should we not undertake the establishment of big and heavy industries in Pakistan? Why should the Muslim League not undertake the planning of a national system of education?"⁷² (this is a long way from seventh-century Arabia); and a committee was appointed to draw up a Five-Year Plan of economic and social uplift (including "free primary basic education" and "reform of land system") and state industrialisation.⁷³ The League members have begun to think of Pakistan as a concrete goal that will be realised within a few years; and some have bent their serious efforts to making it a progressive, modern, and in some cases even socialist, state. The 1944 "Manifesto" of the Punjab Muslim League⁷⁴ (which, as we shall see, had more than any other provincial League emancipated itself from the previously dominant reactionaries) was the League's first statement of detailed programme, and it reads almost like a communist document. The Bengal Muslim League's 1945 draft Manifesto,⁷⁵ published immediately after

71. See a speech by Jinnāh at the Punjab Muslim League session, Lyallpur, 10 November 1942 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 20 November 1942)

72. Abdul Hamid (ed.), *Thirty-First Session of the All-India Muslim League*, pp. 28 and 29.

73. *ibid.*, pp. 67 f.

74. *The Eastern Times*, Lahore, 9 November 1944. Also printed separately by the Muslim League: *Manifesto of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League 1944*

75. *Dawn*, New Delhi, Late Dak edition, 1 April 1945.

the Bengal ministry was overthrown, was still more radical, looked forward still more clearly to a people's rule. These pronouncements compared most favourably with the Congress election manifestos of 1937.

Let us examine briefly the organisational development of the Muslim League during its transformation period. First, in the legislatures of the Muslim provinces. We have already seen how at the time of the Cripps mission the League was the chief opposition party in Sind and Bengal; in the Punjab the Muslim members of the party in office (Unionist) confessed allegiance also to the League; while in Assam and the Frontier the constitution had been suspended. Meanwhile the League was growing in strength. Then came the agonising "disturbances" of 1942, when the severity of governmental repression increased anti-imperialist feeling acutely and made the bureaucracy look anxiously for allies. They created (August 1942) a "Muslim League" coalition ministry in Assam, under a wealthy and reliable knight. They dismissed (October 1942) from the prime ministership of Sind the Nationalist Muslim, Allāh Bakhsh, for his anti-British sentiments⁷⁶; and appointed as his successor another wealthy and reliable knight who presently joined the Muslim League, forming a League coalition ministry. They forced the vacillating Faḍl al-Haqq in Bengal to resign his prime ministership (March 1943), following his dispute with the governor over the methods of repression⁷⁷; and presently installed in his place still another wealthy and reliable knight with another Muslim League ministry. In the Frontier province, they installed (August 1943) a Muslim League ministry under still another reliable premier. The League leapt at these chances of office: the right-wing elements because they were fascinated by office's loaves and fishes, the progressives

76. See Allāh Bakhsh's letter to the viceroy, the latter's reply, and the dismissal: *The Tribune*, Lahore, 27 September and 11 October 1942.

77. See his statement in the Bengal Assembly at the time of his resignation (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 30 March 1943), and his later divulgence there of the previous correspondence between himself and the governor (*ibid.*, 6 and 7 July 1943); compare the statement of Shyama Prasad Mukharji on his earlier resignation as Finance Minister (*ibid.*, 24 November 1942).

because it seemed a method of strengthening the party for its all-India programme. But in all these instances, as in the Punjab, the ministries were closely knit to the bureaucracy, and were peopled primarily by the old feudal potentates or by pro-British careerists.

Charges of corruption and gross speculation became plentiful ; and were hardly even answered. These were the vicious months of famine, profiteer hoarding, and the degradation of morale. Police oppression under these regimes was severe ; the oppression of the "black market" was still worse. In no sense whatever could these ministries have been called people's governments. In many cases the dependence on the imperialist machinery was naked : the Frontier ministry, at no time commanding a majority of the House, stayed in office only by dint of keeping some of the opposition members in prison without trial ; the Bengal ministry survived motions of "no confidence" only by reason of the European votes.⁷⁸

With these ministries in power, critics of the League needed no further argument in their indictment ; any ill-treatment that the Muslims may have received under Congress provincial governments paled into insignificance (at least in the minds of Hindus and Sikhs, and Muslim Pathāns) beside the sufferings of the people where the League was in office. But also the rank-and-file Muslims began to turn against these ministries. Bourgeois and progressive Leaguers might for a time applaud the ministries, however reactionary, as an organisational bulwark ; and might cling to them for the prestige that they badly needed, and for a counter in the coming bargain with the Congress. But as the middle-class, and especially later the lower-class, groups within the League developed, they must eventually outgrow these feudal and bureaucratic entanglement, that disgusted them and others ; and must look for power for themselves. A split became inevitable.

In every one of the provinces a struggle developed between a left and a right wing within the League. In each case it was the

78. 21 June 1944 ; see *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, Dak edition, 24 June 1944, editorial.

right that was dominant ; the left was trying to become so, or, failing to oust the feudalists, was trying to wring a liberal compromise. In the Muslim provinces, the struggle took the form of rivalry or open conflict between the local Muslim League and the local Muslim League parliamentary party : between the people and the provincial government.

In Bengal, the progressives, under the leadership of the able provincial League secretary, Abul-Hāshim, fought the millionaires, represented by the Naẓim al-Dīn ministry. At the annual Council meeting in November 1944, the former group, though powerful, was still unable to move beyond a subordinate position.⁷⁹ In March 1945, the ministry fell—caught between popular pressure (some of it Muslim League) particularly for cloth rationing and against livid corruption, on the one hand, and the powerful, corrupt commercial magnates on the other. In the Frontier, the progressives had among their leaders the provincial League president, Bakht Jamāl (he has been to jail as a principal Khudā'ī Khidmatgār in 1930) ; but the reactionaries rallied strong around the prime minister, Awrangzeb. Also in Assam, the provincial Muslim League quarrelled with the provincial prime minister, and opposed his government ; while Muslim League public meetings were banned by the Muslim League ministry. In March 1945, the ministry preserved itself in office only by succumbing to popular pressure of both the Congress and the League, and declared itself a coalition—the Congress members supporting it, without actually sharing office, on condition that it accept a programme put forward by themselves.

But it was in the Punjab and Sind that these struggles were most acute, and came out most clearly in the open. The landlord and pro-British ministry in the Punjab resisted with such determination an attempt to make it subject to the discipline of the provincial and the all-India Muslim Leagues, that it broke away altogether ; in May 1944, the prime minister, Khidr Hayāt

79. See the account of the meeting in *People's War*, Bombay, 3 December 1944. After a struggle, the progressive group were able to keep their leader in his post as secretary ; but were unable to dislodge the old guard in the elections to the Working Committee.

Tiwānah, was expelled from the League, and nearly all the Muslim members of the Assembly sided with him and resigned from the League ; a handful of the younger, more progressive elements sided with Jinnah, and crossed the floor of the House. The result was that the provincial Muslim League became, within the legislature, a smallish opposition party, but outside of it, a popular movement. Thus purged of most of its feudal and almost all of its bureaucratic, imperialist entanglements, it forged ahead. It set an example to the rest of India by perforce arriving at the only ultimate solution for the country : both within and without the legislature, after the split, it allied itself with the Congress. The two bodies began voting together and supporting each other in the House ; and held joint public meetings outside, demanding among other things the release of Congress prisoners. And we have already mentioned the very progressive "Manifesto" issued by the Punjab Muslim League, with its programme of civil liberties, education, improvement of labour conditions, village uplift, and industrialisation, including nationalised key industries.

In Sind the divergence between the liberal and the conservative groups in the League was equally explicit, but the result less decisive. As usual, the conflict was between the provincial League and the provincial ministry, with the complication that the former group and its executive included many members of the legislature. The respective leaders were the provincial League's very popular president, G.M. Sayyid, and the opportunist prime minister, Sir Ghulām Husayn Hidāyat Allāh. The former represented the growing commercial and peasant movements, and stood for co-operation with the Congress ; the latter represented himself and the big landlords, and stood for co-operation with the British. The provincial League attempted, but failed, to control the ministry ; but did succeed in restraining its grosser corruption.⁸⁰ At a bye-election in January 1945, two "Muslim League" candidates contested the seat, the one

80. In July 1914, the Working Committee of the Sind Provincial Muslim League passed a resolution calling up the ministry to resign (*The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, Dak edition, 9 July 1944). This effort proved futile, but the ministry did abolish the Grain Purchasing Syndicate.

supported by the ministerialist group, the other by the provincial League executive.⁸¹ (Little else could show more clearly the transformation in recent years of Muslim politics in India, whereby the Muslim League, once a faction, had become a comprehensive Muslim-nationalist movement : ideological and practical issues, and even class conflicts, were being fought out between groupings *within* the League, rather than between the League and other parties.) Finally, in February 1945, the Leaguers in the Assembly split into two groups, of which the more progressive (and slightly larger) voted with the opposition and overthrew the ministry. Jinnāh—who is more interested in real power than in popular support without it, and had shed a tear over the loss to his group of those who held office in the Punjab—sided with Sir Ghulām and the governor. He has wanted above all to keep the League united. A new Muslim League ministry was formed, with the same reactionaries in charge ; while the progressives under Sayyid were forced by the central League executive to submit ; but they were awarded concessions such as a cabinet post for one of their own group and closer co-operation with the Hindus.

In the Frontier, the same sort of anti-popular elements formed the ministry, and ruled in alliance with the British and the police. At first, they had also some enthusiasm from the people (as evidenced in the Muslim bye-elections held shortly after they came to power) ; but this soon waned, as the common folk saw themselves in deepened want while the ministers got rich and fat. The bureaucracy did everything that it could to keep the Muslim League in office—even cancelling a whole session of the Assembly when it became clear that, were one held, a “no-confidence” motion would be carried.⁸² Such tactics, however, could not be indefinitely prolonged ; and by March 1945, the ministry was ejected ; some Muslim Leaguers themselves

81. The bye-election from Tando Muhammad Khan constituency, held 25 January 1945. See *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, Dak edition, 26 January, 27 January and 4 February 1945.

82. See the correspondence between the secretary of the Congress parliamentary party and the governor ; *ibid* , 22 December 1944.

having turned against it, disgusted with its anti-popular record.

Before we consider the implications of these recent internal developments, let us pause to survey how the organisational and popular growth of the Muslim League has affected its role in all-India politics, *vis-a-vis* the Congress and the British government. In the earlier stages, when the League was still a relatively small party, it had simply been sowing discord; its extravagant demands were calculated, not to wring a compromise favourable to itself, but to make all compromise impossible. One cannot read the documents critically without realising that during these years the League did not want a settlement, and deliberately crushed all efforts towards one.⁸³ In the months after the Cripps mission, on the other hand, substantial groups within the League began to press for a settlement, and urged Jinnāh to take the initiative.⁸⁴ Jinnāh was able to dissuade them from insisting on

83. See principally *Re Hindu-Muslim Settlement. Correspondence between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah, Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. Jinnah, and between S. Bose and Mr. Jinnah*. Also, Rajindra Prasbad's statement to the press, Patna, 16 April 1941, and Jinnāh's reply, Madras, 17 April 1941 (given in *The Sunday Statesman*, North India edition, 20 April 1941). See further, Mohammad Noman, *Muslim India*, especially pp. 332 ff.; and Jamil-ul-Din Ahmad (ed.), *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, passim.

84 Examples: 'Abd al-Latif Farrukhī, secretary, Madras Presidency Muslim League, in a press statement, Madras, 28 August 1942 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 29 August 1942).

Shaykh Ṣādiq Ḥasān, M.I.A., vice-president, Punjab Muslim League, in a press statement, Simla, 28 August 1942 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 29 August 1942).

'Abbās 'Alī Kamāl, vice-president, Central Provinces Muslim League, in a statement, Nagpur, 31 August 1942 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, Late Dak edition, 2 September 1942).

A.A. Allāh Pichā'ī, secretary, Madras Provincial Muslim League, in a statement, Madras, 4 September 1942 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, Late Dak edition, 6 September 1942).

A Bombay "memorandum submitted to Mr. Jinnah by a large number of local Muslim Leaguers and other prominent members of the Muslim community" urging him to take the initiative for a Congress-League pact (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 28 September 1942).

Z.H. Lāri and S.N.A. Ja'fari were reported to have tabled a non-official resolution to be placed before the November 1942 session of the Council of

their demand,⁸⁵ presumably on the grounds that to wait for an agreement until the League was stronger would mean a better agreement. But the pressure continued ; and it has become more and more nearly evident that the League really planned to have a settlement as soon as it could be sure of a good one. It began to speak of a free Pakistan in a free India ; and began to sound as if it meant it.

On the other hand, as a concrete settlement between the British, the Congress, and the League has loomed more plausible and imminent, the whole political scene has become less a matter of statements and demands, reasonable or unreasonable, and more simply a ruthless struggle for power.

At the same time as the Muslim League was growing stronger, it became increasingly anti-imperialist. Its resolutions and its leaders' statements grew more and more outspoken on this point ; in the Central Assembly it took to voting consistently against the government. This latter policy was begun in February 1944 ; it marked the League's first step that directly embarrassed the government.⁸⁶ The League had obviously not yet the All-India Muslim League, that the president of the League take the initiative in negotiating a Congress-League pact for a joint demand for a provisional coalition government during the war, and for the immediate and complete transfer of power ; "provided the Congress acknowledges the principle of self-determination and pledges to abide by the verdict of the plebiscite of the Mussalmans"—(*The Tribune*, Lahore, 28 October 1942).

"A number of influential Muslims of Tellichery . . . including the Muslim Leaguers" sent a memorandum to Jinnāh, appealing to him to take the initiative in solving the deadlock (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 3 November 1942).

It was reported (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 10 November 1942) that Jinnāh had persuaded Sir Karīmḥā'ī Ibrāhīm and Mr Lā'ī not to move certain resolutions, including one suggesting that Jinnāh communicate the League's Bombay resolution (August 1942) to Gandhi.

85. At the meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, Bombay, 19-20 August 1942 ; and again at the meeting of the Council, Delhi, November 1942 (*The Tribune*, Lahore, 19 August, 20 August, 21 August, and 10 November 1942).

86. In the autumn of 1943 it had expelled from the League a knight who joined the Viceroy's Executive Council, and a lady who joined the National Defence Council ; and made three prominent Leaguers resign from the latter ; cf. above, pp. 305 f. at reference 15, and reference 22 to p. 311. That incident was a fairly minor anti-government gesture, however.

become ready to launch an anti-British offensive in action, nor could it do so without a prior agreement with the Congress (the weight of British imperialism would utterly crush it alone) ; but the government itself began to wonder whether an increasing number of Leaguers were not ready and even impatient for that offensive as soon as an agreement could be reached. But Jinnāh, apart from being personally a constitutionalist rather than a revolutionary, has had no wish to give up his very valuable alliance or mutual tolerance with the government, until the last moment. Besides, the League has not yet been tested in action ; he has not been quite sure how severe sacrifices individual League enthusiasts would make for the organisation.

The various trends came to a head in the Gandhi-Jinnāh talks of September 1944. Rajagopalacharya, keen on a Congress-League *rapprochement*, had worked out a formula for partitioning India ; and persuaded Gandhi to accept it in his personal capacity. Gandhi also pledged himself to use all his influence with the Congress (then in jail) to get it to ratify any agreement that he and Jinnāh might make. (Mutual suspicion has been so great that such a pledge meant little to the Muslims. Jinnāh, as it turned out, adopted the attitude that, since Gandhi was not officially representing the Congress, no negotiating or settlement was possible, the purpose of the talks being simply to convert Gandhi to the principles of the League's demands.)

The most significant thing about these talks was, of course, their failure to produce any agreement. But almost equally significant were the prior enthusiastic and vibrant hopes for their success, throughout the country and especially throughout the Muslim League. The rank-and-file Muslims in the League, and its many progressive leaders, office-holders and editors, were extremely keen that the negotiations should lead to a Congress-League settlement. A majority, probably, of Congressmen also hoped for their success, though the conservatives were opposed, and put pressure on Gandhi not to make concessions. The real leaders of the Congress being in prison, the field was open for the reactionary Mahasabha spokesmen to make their opposition clamorous. The League as a whole was more wholeheartedly in

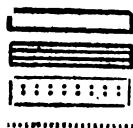
favour of a settlement than the Congress ; and it was Leaguers who were most bitterly dejected when the conversations failed. Desperate frustration followed on the breakdown, with uncalculated consequences in increased alienation and irrationality. Both sides, of course, placed the blame for the failure on the hated communal enemy, the leader of the other side.

The talks failed partly because neither Gandhi nor Jinnāh was able to understand the other's point of view ; and partly because Jinnāh did not want a settlement.

In the former connection, we may note that, in so far as it is possible to infer any logical basis for the breakdown, the main points at issue seem to have been three : a plebiscite, the powers of a provisional government, and machinery for dealing with matters of common interest between Pakistan and Hindustan. Regarding the first, Gandhi insisted that there must be a plebiscite of all the adult inhabitants in the regions to be separated ; Jinnāh refused to hear of any plebiscite that would include non-Muslims. (Perhaps the Muslims of whom a plebiscite might, according to the League, be taken, are all the Muslims of India, not merely those of the Pakistan area. "We claim the right of self-determination as a nation and not as a territorial unit."⁸⁷) Secondly, Gandhi wanted a provisional government to be set up in India with full powers, independent of Britain (except in military matters as long as the war should last), which government would subsequently hold a plebiscite, demarcate Pakistan, and realise partition ; Jinnāh apparently felt that such a government, if full powers were transferred to it and the British departed, could not be trusted to carry out whatever pledges it might previously have made to the Muslims. Presumably he therefore visualised that the whole matter of demarcation and division should be not only agreed upon but actually carried out before the British left the country—though he did not say so. Thirdly, Gandhi insisted that the agreement to partition India must include arrangements for joint dealing with matters of common interest between the two states, such as defence, foreign affairs,

87. Jinnāh's letter to Gandhi of 21 September 1944 ; Liaquat Ali Khan (ed.), *Jinnah-Gandhi Talks*, p. 30.

SKETCH MAP OF INDIA ILLUSTRATING THE PAKISTAN DEMAND



British India.

Principal Native States, population predominantly Muslim.

Principal Native States, population predominantly Hindu.

Boundaries of provinces and of the principal Native States.

The minor native states are not shown.

THE MUSLIM LEAGUE DEMAND (1940) : Pakistan in areas "where the Muslims are numerically in a majority".

Interpretation :

————— Encloses Pakistan as demanded by the League (1944) : the six provinces.

- - - - - Encloses Pakistan District-wise : i.e. administrative Districts in which Muslims are in a majority.

Statistics :

Six-Provinces Pakistan :

Total population : 107,004,783

Muslim population : 59,101,207 = 55.23%

Total area : 348,337 sq. miles.

District-wise Pakistan :

Total population : 68,779,935

Muslim population : 49,395,030 – 71·82%
Total area : 231,631 sq. miles
Disputed area (eastern Punjab, western Bengal, most of Assam)
Total population : 38,224,848
Muslim population : 9,706,177 = 25·30%
Area : 116,706 sq. miles
Total Muslim population of India : 94,389,428
Total Muslim population of British India : 79,398,503
Percentage of Muslims of British India who live in the six-provinces
Pakistan : 74·44.
Percentage of Muslims of British India who live in the District-wise
Pakistan : 62·21

Based on The Census of India, 1941

internal communications, etc. ; Jinnāh was rather self-contradictory about whether there might be such matters of common interest⁸⁸ but anyway insisted that they must be agreed upon by the two states after they had become separate and sovereign, not before.

There was also a difference of geographic interpretation ; though the total lack of agreement on other matters kept this point from being effectively discussed. Previously, it had been impossible to discover what, geographically, the Muslim League had meant by Pakistan. Gandhi in these talks envisaged it as embracing such administrative Districts (they are all contiguous) as have more than 50% Muslim population. Such a District-wise Pakistan (see map) would include Baluchistan, Sind, and the Frontier Province, one District in Assam, and those parts of Bengal and the Punjab that have Muslim majorities. Jinnāh had ridiculed this suggestion as "a shadow and a husk, maimed, mutilated, and moth-eaten Pakistan"⁸⁹ ; and he now told Gandhi that if this concept were accepted, "the present boundaries of these provinces would be maimed and mutilated beyond redemption and leave us only with the husk."⁹⁰ In other words, the League, in demanding the partition of India,

88. "There cannot be defence and similar matters of common concern" (21 September 1944) ; "I am sorry that you think I have summarily rejected the idea of common interest" (23 September 1944) ; *ibid.*, pp. 31 and 33.

89. Jinnāh's speech to the Muslim League Council, Lahore, 30 July 1944 (*ibid.*, p. xv).

90. Jinnāh's letter to Gandhi of 25 September 1944 (*ibid.*, p. 43).

was refusing to consider the partition of Bengal and the Punjab (This question is liable to become the essential geographic issue.) For the first time (September 1944) the League now put forward a demand that was specific : Jinnāh insisted that Pakistan should embrace not only the solidly-Muslim provinces (Baluchistan, Sind, and the Frontier), but also the whole of Assam⁹¹ and the whole of Bengal and the Punjab ; "subject to territorial adjustments that may be agreed upon."⁹²

It would seem not illogical to infer that the position towards which the Muslim League has been moving is something like this. Before the British leave the country, British India should be divided into two distinct states : one ("Pakistan") comprising the present six provinces of Assam and Bengal, and the North-West Frontier, Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan ; and the other ("Hindustan") comprising the remaining areas. Pakistan and Hindustan so constituted should then negotiate with each other, as sovereign and equal states, regarding any mutual adjustments in boundary and, if they so wished, regarding setting up machinery for joint administration of any matters of mutual interest that they might decide upon. The British imperial government should transfer to these two states so constituted full sovereign power. The constitution of each state should contain safeguards for its minorities, drawn up in consultation with those minorities. The question of the princes' states is explicitly not under discussion.

There is much room in these Gandhi-Jinnāh divergences for disagreement; and considerable cause for hesitation before non-Muslims, especially in eastern Punjab and western Bengal, should agree to such a Pakistan. However, an equally important reason for the failure of the Ghandi-Jinnāh talks in 1944 was the fact, as we have said, that Jinnāh did not really want a settlement. This applies equally not only to those particular talks but to the general absence of any settlement to date ; and not only to Jinnāh but to a large and influential group within the League. Just as the conservatives within the Congress have been opposed

91. Roughly, Assam has 34% Hindus, 33% Muslims, 32% Tribals.

92. Jinnāh's letter to Gandhi of 25 September 1944. (Liaquat Ali Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 40).

to making concessions to the League, and have wanted no settlement on the basis of partition ; so the conservatives within the League have not wanted a settlement, at least not yet.

A careful reading of the published correspondence summarising the talks⁹³ makes it evident that Jinnāh was not working for a settlement. He virtually stated this, in his insistence that he would not negotiate with Gandhi (but would merely try to convert him to the principles of the League demands) so long as the latter was not officially representing the Congress. Since the Congress Working Committee was in jail, this implied that Jinnāh entertained no prospect of a settlement at least until the British released the leaders (which he had constantly refused to ask them to do). Apart from that, if the League had really wanted an agreement, it would presumably have put forth its proposals in a form as explicit as possible ; instead of merely attacking bitterly as inadequate all others' proposals, and asking for acceptance of the almost meaninglessly vague "Lahore resolution".⁹⁴

That resolution, apart from its interal ambiguities, is introduced with a double negative ; as were also Jinnāh's published statements on Pakistan in his 1944 talks with Gandhi. The League has fought very shy of committing itself. Most Leaguers have apparently had no inkling of how extremely difficult it has been for others to discover what it is that the League wants. But it is not easy to believe that Mr Jinnāh and his Working Committee have been equally unaware. When they really want a settlement, surely they will endeavour so to frame their demands as to allay as much as may be Congress and other objections to them.

The two most important of these objections have to do with the geography of the proposed Pakistan and with its form of

93. *The Gandhi-Jinnah Talks* (published by *The Hindustan Times*) and *Jinnah-Gandhi Talks* (published by the Muslim League). It is interesting to compare the announcement of the breakdown of the talks and the first presentation of the correspondence, in Congress and Muslim League daily newspapers. *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, and *Dawn*, Delhi, in their respective issues of 28 September 1944.

94. The relevant portion of this resolution is given above, page 309, at reference 21.

government. We have already touched on the former point, but it needs elaborating. Shortly after the breakdown of his conversations with Gandhi, Jinnah made the following statement : "To understand the Pakistan demand in its full significance it is to be borne in mind that the six Provinces, viz. N.W.F.P., Baluchistan, Sind, the Punjab in the North-West, and Bengal and Assam in the North East of this sub-continent, have a population of 70 million Muslims and [sc. 'the'] total population of Muslims would not be less than 70 per cent. . . . It is in these zones that Muslims wish to establish Pakistan as an independent State."⁹⁵ Either this statement does not mean what it seems to mean, or else Mr Jinnah either was lying or was grossly misinformed. According to the 1941 census, the Muslim population of these six provinces is 59,101,207; and this is but 55.23% of the total population of these provinces. In point of area, these provinces include well over 100,000 sq. miles of contiguous Districts (31% of the total area) in which Muslims are in a minority.⁹⁶

A Muslim state formed District-wise would include 49 million Muslims, constituting 72% of its population.⁹⁷ Naturally, in drawing frontiers neither the present District boundaries nor those of the present provinces would be sacrosanct; also economic and sociological implications would have to be considered. In other words, no matter what the basis, "territorial adjustments" would be in order. Such a separate state would embrace areas that are really predominantly Muslim, and would give Muslims a stable majority in their central Pakistan government. But to demand almost half again as much territory, predominantly (75%⁹⁸) non-Muslim; and to reduce the overall Mus-

95. In an interview for *The Daily Worker*, London, given in Bombay, 5 October 1944; reprinted with emphasis in Liaquat Ali Khan, op. cit., p. 79.

96. Calculations made from *Census of India 1941*.

97. Calculation made from the figures in Ambedkar, *Pakistan; or Partition of India* (1945 edition), Appendices II, IV, V, VI (pp. 418 ff.). The total population of such a District-wise Pakistan is 68,779,935.

98. The total area of a District-wise Pakistan is 231,631 sq. miles; the area of the non-Muslim-majority Districts in Assam, Bengal, and the Punjab is 116,706 sq. miles. The total population of the latter Districts is 38,224,848; of whom 9,706,177 are Muslims (25.39%). Calculations from figures in *Census of India 1941* and Ambedkar, op. cit.

lim majority in Pakistan to merely 55% ; has seemed to most Congressmen (also to many Leaguers once they have stopped to think about it) as preposterous. Worse, it has confirmed their impression that the Pakistan demand is not a sincere proposal at all but merely a pro-imperialist obstructionist slogan.

The geographical issue seems to sum up the contradictions within the League programme. In so far as the League has voiced the freedom urge of the Muslim masses living in the underdeveloped, Muslim, parts of India, Pakistan would comprise simply those Muslim areas. Secondly, in so far as the League has voiced these separatist tendencies of Muslim capitalism, it has naturally hankered after as large an area as it could control and exploit, in this case the whole six provinces ; and has hesitated to abandon eastern Punjab and western Bengal, even though they be Sikh and Hindu, just as "Hindu" capitalists have been opposed to conceding Pakistan or British capitalists have been opposed to freeing India. (In addition, it is ironic that the very propaganda of the Mahasabha against a separate Muslim state on the grounds that it would be economically and otherwise unworkable, has encouraged Muslims to demand a larger and larger area so that it will be workable.) Thirdly, in so far as the League has still acted for those elements who have not wanted a settlement at all (also, perhaps, in so far as it has represented the minority Muslims in the rest of India), its demands have been for an undefined, extravagant Pakistan.

To delimit Pakistan geographically, therefore, would be to resolve the conflicts within the Muslim community, if not within India at large. It is consequently not likely to come about apart from a major political settlement.

The second main obstacle in the way of non-Muslims' accepting the Pakistan demand has to do with the form of government in the proposed Muslim state. The League has moved in the general direction of indicating that in that government the large non-Muslim minorities would be given their due share ; but has moved slowly, and has not yet moved far. For a time it appeared, especially in view of the League's rabid opposition to the non-Muslims' participating in a plebiscite, that the

Pakistan government would represent only Muslims, and perhaps even the Muslims of the whole of India. In April 1943, Mr Jinnāh contented himself with telling the minorities that the League had passed a resolution assuring them of the fullest safeguards, and that the history and Prophet of Islam gave "the clearest proof that non-Muslims have been treated not only justly and fairly but generously."⁹⁹ (This kind of remark has brought forth from Hindus the same sort of derision as has been evoked amongst Muslims by Congress assurances that minorities would be treated fairly in a united India.) In October 1944, he stated that the government of Pakistan would be "their [i.e. of the Muslims in Pakistan] own real democratic popular Government. This Government will have the sanction of the mass of the population of Pakistan and will function with the will and sanction of the entire body of people in Pakistan, irrespective of caste, creed or colour."¹⁰⁰ What this might mean is hardly clear. In January 1945, he said that "the government of Pakistan or Hindustan . . . could only be . . . a democratic form."¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, the secretary of the League had stated (October 1944) that the people of Pakistan would frame their constitution in a Constituent Assembly.¹⁰²

The logical end of this development would be that this last point be embodied in an official League resolution, on the lines of the Congress resolution on the same subject,¹⁰³ guaranteeing to all inhabitants of the proposed Pakistan provinces a Constituent Assembly based on equal suffrage, and a declaration of Fundamental Rights. This would make a Hindu-Muslim agree-

99. Speech to the Annual Session of the Muslim League, Delhi, April 1943 (*Dawn*, Delhi, First Dak edition, 3 May 1943).

100. Interview for *The Daily Worker*, London; in Liaquat Ali Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

101. Speech at Ahmedabad (*The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, Dak edition, 17 January 1945).

102. Liyāqat 'Alī Khān, in an interview for *The Student and People's War*, 29 October 1944 (*People's War*, Bombay, 12 November 1944).

103. See K. Santhanam, Conciliation Committee Information Series: *Government—Congress—League Declarations*, p. 20 (the Ramgarh resolution on the Constituent Assembly, 1940); cf. *ibid.*, pp. 18 f. (the Calcutta and Haripura resolutions on Fundamental Rights, 1937-8).

ment much easier. It would also meet both parties' position on the plebiscite question, since such a Constituent Assembly would be a form of plebiscite (of all inhabitants), following partition but preceding the actual functioning of the two states.¹⁰⁴

Until now, we have been discussing chiefly the League's demand of Pakistan. There remains its other and in some ways more fundamental demand : that the League itself be recognised as the only authoritative and representative organisation of the Muslims of India. This does not mean that the League claims to be the *only* Muslim party. It means rather that, in the League view, the Muslims of India are a distinct people who can treat with other peoples (the Hindus, the British, or whoever) only as a unit ; that only one body can represent them at a time. If this principle be granted, no one could then deny that the League is that body. Leaguers draw a parallel to other "nations"—for instance, the British : there are many political parties in Britain; but, they point out, any outside government wishing to negotiate with the British people must negotiate only with the party in power. The Labour Party has never, at the polls, got the backing of anything like 100 % of the British people, nor is it at all their only party ; but since July 1945 it has been the only "authoritative and representative" party of the British nation.

This idea, this "two-nation" theory, has profoundly stirred the Muslims of India and won their vigorous assent—and their unflinching loyalty. For this principle they are prepared to fight, some even to die ; and until it is accepted, they refuse to discuss any issue, or to negotiate with any group. Even to offer them Pakistan without it (as Rajagopalacharya did) has failed to win their interest. Without its acceptance, Jinnāh was able to wreck the 1945 Simla Conference. Actually, there is little evidence that Jinnāh was at all keen to have that conference succeed. Most of his followers, however, were keen. The common people on both

104. The " Draft Manifesto " of the Bengal provincial Muslim League (see reference 75 above), issued since the above was written, made precisely this promise, in so far as "Eastern Pakistan" is concerned. It also admitted that doing so was, among other things, a step towards winning the confidence of non-Muslims.

sides were extremely eager that this unprecedented opportunity of progress be seized, coming as it did after three years of oppression and chaos, economic and moral, such as suffering India had not known for long. Yet when Jinnāh explained that he had sacrificed the conference for the principle of the Muslims' national unity, he was cheered.

At this point one may raise the question, to what extent has Pakistan been merely a symbol : an idea which has emotionally stirred the Muslims, rather than a practical plan the concrete implications of which will in fact satisfy their immense frustration. Twenty-five years earlier the Indian Muslims were lashed into frenzy over the *khilāfat* ("Caliphate") issue; it was too but a symbol, idealising their thirst for freedom, but in practice a quite false issue which soon betrayed them mercilessly. And there are Indian Muslims to-day who have wanted Pakistan in order to prove that they are a nation, rather than *vice versa*. No doubt their frustration over the *khilāfat* affair has been an unconscious factor in their aggressiveness over this. If Pakistan too should turn out a mere will-o'-the-wisp, the psychological consequences would be vicious and pitiful.

And it may well turn out impracticable. The concrete and detailed problems—geographic, ethnographic, economic, strategic, and so on and on—that would be involved in partitioning India have never been faced by the League as a body (and by remarkably few if any even of its individual members) with honesty and intelligence. Yet those problems are immensely difficult and intricate. They might very easily either shatter the idea, or shatter the new state itself if one were, none the less, obstinately formed.

Whatever happens to the Pakistan plan, however, it has seemed probable that the Muslim group-consciousness that has been engendered will survive ; and will have to be respected by the non-Muslim groups.

The points at issue between the Congress and the League could probably be solved—by negotiation between equals—given on both sides' trust rather than suspicion and hatred, and a real readiness to solve them. It is this trust and this readiness that

have been lacking. The practical question has been whether the forces within both the Congress and the League, wishing a settlement, could be strengthened, until they should take over power from the obstructive or dilatory groups. In other words, it has been a political or organisational problem, more than a constitutional one. A Congress-League settlement would come not when a nice formula were produced but when the progressives in both parties were powerful. (A satisfactory formula might help, of course, to strengthen them.)

Many Congressmen have unrealistically thought of crushing the League or of by-passing it. Many have been content to hold up the freedom of India until the Muslims should "come to their senses" and the League die of stalemate. The Congress's big capitalists would prefer, perhaps, to make a deal with the India Office, something short of independence, rather than to lose the markets and raw materials of Pakistan.

Liberal Leaguers have been content to wait until their organisation should grow stronger. Even during 1944 many were content to think in terms of the next provincial elections, whenever they should come. Some of the progressives even hoped that new elections would enable them to get rid of the present reactionary League ministries and to take political power as a progressive movement.

The flaw in any programme of waiting has been its ignoring the alarming deterioration meanwhile of national life. The longer a settlement has been postponed, the greater has been the alienation between the communities, while famine and oppression continued.

When the Punjab Muslim League published its people's manifesto and, co-operating with the Congress, demanded the release of Congress leaders, opponents pointed out with scorn that it had waited till it was out of office before doing so ; and asked bitterly why, if the League wanted Congressmen out of jail, it did not release them in those provinces where it was the government. This scorn, though not surprising, ignored the dynamics of the situation. It was not "the League" as such that sought co-operation either with the Congress or with the bureau-

cracy ; but rather its developing popular forces that were moving toward the former, while the conservative, official, and feudal forces, whose dominance was being challenged, stood for the *status quo*. The popular forces have not been strong enough to maintain themselves alone ; and their temporary expedient has been to ally themselves with the Muslim conservatives and reactionaries and even with the British. In the Punjab that alliance in 1944 was broken ; progressive Congressmen should have nothing but welcome for the purged League that emerged. In other provinces, the League's progressive forces have been still dependent on the League's right wing ; and could not desert the latter unless an alternative alliance, with the Congress progressives, were open to them. The more they have clung to their own right wing, the less the Congress has been prepared to deal with them ; and the less the Congress has been prepared to deal with them, the more they have had to cling to their own right wing. Similarly, within the Congress : the less likely a settlement with the League has become, the stronger have grown the anti-League elements ; and the stronger the anti-League elements have grown, the less likely a settlement has become. The breakdown of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks in 1944 was followed by an unprecedented upsurge of reactionary Hindu Mahasabha elements within the Congress, amounting almost to a capture of power by them (the official Congress leaders being in jail) ; and they launched strong attacks on both the Muslims and the left-wing Congress groups.

The breakdown of the Simla Conference (June 1945), at which the British government offered representative Indians administrative power, carried far further the same vicious spiral. The Simla failure was a disaster, whose ruination can hardly be overestimated. It made this not only more obvious but also more tragically true: that no progress in India is possible without an ultimate understanding between the Congress and the League. Every year through which India lives without such an agreement, without the co-operation of the Hindu and Muslim communities in popular governments in the provinces and at the centre or centres, means not only continued disease, want, and

oppression, and in the national economy, near-chaos, but also mounting frustration and hatred, and increased obstacles in the way of that agreement.

During 1942-5 the groups within both the Congress and the League working for a settlement seemed to be making progress. But those in the League were unable at Simla to divert Jinnāh from his policy of disruption. Those in the Congress, after repeated rebuffs from the League and from Jinnāh's truculent disdain, began to be rebuffed in the Congress as well ; and after Simla their cause was shattered.

The Congress at its subsequent meeting (Bombay, September 1945) not only abandoned categorically any prospect of treating with the League. It also stated in a resolution that it could not agree to any proposal to partition India. (At the same time it announced ambiguously that it could not "think in terms of" compelling the people of any area to remain in an Indian union against their will.) Worse, it rudely shouted down its own few Muslim members who moved amendments asking for self-determination for the Muslim-majority areas, if their delegates wanted it in the Constituent Assembly to which the Congress looked forward. The Congress, in a bitter anti-Muslim and anti-Communist tirade, passed into the hands of irreconcilable reactionaries.

The Simla Conference failed partly because the Congress and the League each imagined that it could get more from the third party, Lord Wavell, than it could from its Indian confrere. Actually, by this policy each got nothing at all. None the less, both organisations subsequently gave themselves to the same policy with renewed vigour. The leaders of each aimed not at a united front, but at self-aggrandizement for their own party, and at reliance upon British imperialism to help outwit the communal foe.

The consequent collapsing morale and continued economic confusion have been terrible to contemplate. Alongside of the rising people's movements and the urge toward freedom in terms of group co-operation, have gone also rising communal discord and the bankruptcy of leadership. The Congress, though clam-

ouring for independence, has become controlled by an aggressive capitalist group which, instead of leading a united front for freedom, against alien domination, has turned to leading a factional strife with two main enemies : Indian Muslims and Indian Communists. The League has been a heterogeneous alliance, comprising three main groups : discontented communalists, especially in southern India, looking for prestige and for bargaining power ; capitalists aiming at the establishment of an independent bourgeois state in parts of India, with themselves as the sovereign ruling class ; and, in the north, the mass of the people, striving for local freedom in terms that will mean rule of, for, and by themselves.

Of late, the situation in the country has degenerated menacingly. Communal hatred, one of the lowest, if most powerful, of human motivations, has threatened to become the main driving force on both sides. Instead of an India with freedom for all, united in friendly communal partnership, there have been signs pointing to, at best, a stagnant India of intense mutual bickering, on problems of constitutions and problems of daily bread, within an atmosphere of moral degradation and of riots ; and, at worst, an India of civil war.

One may well ask whether, within the present order, there is indeed any solution. Socialists also are appealing for a Congress-League pact. But one may wonder whether they can succeed with this message, unless they succeed also with their message of socialism. They can point to the brilliant success of national autonomy in the Soviet Union. They can argue for a co-operative instead of a competitive order, as necessary to harmony. And they alone can offer the peoples, Muslim and other, real freedom.

If the liberals are strong in each party, it may yet be possible to conciliate the warring groups. Otherwise, the future of India is dark, until the people can build for themselves a union of socialist states.

Part III

**SOME ORGANISED THEOLOGICAL
GROUPS**

The Classical Theologians
A Note on the Ahmadiyah Movement
The Shi'ah

The Classical Theologians

The Muslim theologians of India have, in the modern period, introduced or accepted little that is new in Islam ; they need not, therefore, detain us long. They are still, as a class, attached ideologically and functionally to the old order of society and to classical Islam. A great gulf is fixed between the clergy and the modern educated Muslim ; and another gulf between them and the rising proletarian. The most that the theologians have been able to accomplish is a purifying and refining of the old Islam : they have not understood or had dealings with the new.

One of the significant differences between Christianity and Islam in their adjustments to capitalist society is involved in the fact that the former religion, especially in America, produced a clerical class (its ordained ministers and its seminary professors) which was largely recruited from, and which constituted a part of, the bourgeoisie. The reinterpretation of religion for modern scientific and industrial conditions has not been carried on in Islam by a class specially devoted to or qualified for this task, or in the universities, as in the West. It has been accomplished, as we have seen, by individual bourgeois from other professions, in their spare time. One further consequence has been that whereas modernised Islam has its intellectual statements, it does not have its cult. The middle classes in the West have not only Protestantism but a Protestant Church, including even an advanced liberal section of that Church. The mosques, on the other hand, even in the towns, are still under the feudal divines.

In the Punjab, an attempt to meet this situation has been made by the *Sirat* Movement,¹ and has found a considerable welcome. This movement was started, in the 1920's, by a subordinate member of the new, bourgeois, society : one 'Abd al-Majid Qarashi, a provincial schoolmaster, a man of ability and drive,

1. *Sirat* : the story of Muḥammad's Life. Compare above, p 72.

with a facility for reproducing other people's ideas. (It was originally a liberal campaign for popularising the personality of the Prophet, and has since undertaken also the translation into Urdu of modernist writings like those of Yūsuf 'Alī and the Egyptian Rashid Riḍa'.) The organisation has initiated a move for supplying Friday sermons in the Urdu language to be read in mosques. The local clergy are quite incapable themselves of producing a discourse tolerable to a modernised congregation; but the Sirat Movement's distribution service provides that congregation with typical liberal ideology, and reduces the minister's function to reading it and conducting the service. The middle classes support the movement with financial donations.

The theologues themselves, then—with one or two quite isolated exceptions²—have played almost no part in the transformations and tumultuous processes of modernised Islam (except to oppose them). We will accordingly confine ourselves to a few observations on the present-day political and intellectual alignments of the more important groups. We shall notice the Bareilly school, as accepting without criticism the social and religious conditions of the masses and of the old order in all its collapse; the important Deoband academy, as accepting the old order in principle but trying to revive and purify it; and the Farangī Maḥall and Nadwat al-'Ulamā' in Lucknow, as representing a partial and quite unsuccessful attempt to incorporate something of the new order into the old Islam. The seminaries have an enormous influence throughout India, through the large number of clergy whom they send out everywhere; and they themselves keep, in the same way, in direct touch with the masses. This is particularly true of Deoband, the largest religious institution in the country.

The Bareilly school is important in India, but it is moribund. It expresses and sustains the social and religious customs of a decadent people: the civilisation, or lack of it, into which India fell after the feudal Mughal culture had succumbed and before a new culture arose under the imperial British penetration. In jurisprudence, the school is of the *Ḥanafī* persuasion;

2. Cf. Mawlānā Abul Kalām Āzād and Sayyid Abul A'lā Mawḍūdī.

and it allows no modern reinterpretation of the law (*ijtihād*). It is socially accommodating, winking perhaps at the drinking of wine and the like : but at the same time it adheres to the prevailing superstitions, saint-worship, and degradations. The Barelawī clergy accept the piteous villages of India as they find them ; and their Islam is without qualification or criticism the actual religion of those villages. The leaders of the school devote their extra time to the problems of scholastic theology. Politically, some have favoured the Muslim League ; but mostly they have been apathetic.

Quite different is the famous Deoband seminary. Next to the Azhar of Cairo, it is the most important and respected theological academy of the Muslim world. Its influence and prestige throughout India are, naturally, large ; and they are all the greater for the school's long tradition of concern for the material condition of the Indian Muslims. The tradition is derived ultimately from the movement of Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī and the Indian *Wahhābis* and has expressed itself in the participation of Deobandī theologues in various revolutionary movements, such as the *Ghadr* of 1915 ; and their more recent support of Congress nationalism. Unlike Bareilly, Deoband is thoroughly dissatisfied with things as they are ; and it is vigorous and determined to improve them. Its aim is to resuscitate classical Islam : to rid the Muslims of the theological corruptions, the ritual degradations, and the material exploitation to which they have fallen prey since the British occupation. Theologically, the school stands for a rigid orthodoxy, for the classical, Aristotelian, type. The door of *ijtihād* (reinterpretation of the Law) is closed tight. Deoband maintains rigorously the premisses of Islam ; within the limits of those premisses it is relentlessly rationalist. It attempts to do away with aberrations, compromises, and intellectual laziness. Theological atmosphere is that of an unmitigated scholasticism³ ; the professors use exclusively the old categories of thought. (Hence they are incapable of understanding, let alone solving, any of the problems, social or

3. One of their text-books has appeared in an English translation : Haqqani, *An Introduction to the Commentary on the Holy Qoran*.

philosophic, of the non-feudal society.)

On the practical side, Deobandī theologues are puritanically strict. They work assiduously to overcome and destroy backslidings, superstitions, saint-worship, and all the paraphernalia of ignorance, poverty, and fear in a depressed and decadent agrarian society. Their ideal is traditional Islam at its purest—with a strict enforcement of the Canon Law. Their conception of historical Islam is precise—unlike the liberals', whose roseate picture of an ideal age in the past is coloured more strongly by contemporary liberal aspirations than by any disciplined acquaintance with Islamic studies. Socially, Deoband is progressive to the extent that it strives to eliminate superstitious "accretions"; but it strives equally to eliminate any advance to higher levels. It resists with an intense rigidity all innovation, indiscriminately; whether retrogressive or advanced. For example, it defends polygamy⁴; and has resolutely opposed compulsory education for Muslim girls.⁵ The Deoband movement is, essentially, reactionary and feudal. Yet its implacable enmity to bourgeois society and to its depredations has made it a temporary and important ally of the progressive forces—as we shall see presently when we consider its energetic politics, anti-British and for a time anti-Pakistan.

The third important seminary in India is the Farangī Mahall in Lucknow. Rather similar to it is the Nadwat al-'Ulamā' in the same city. These also are orthodox; but they are beginning slowly to develop. They permit *ijtihād* (reinterpretation), though not for laymen. Their own decisions under this head have been far from radical. They go so far as to recognise modern problems: for they have allowed themselves to be that far involved in the new bourgeois order. But their answers to those problems are either conservative in the old sense or hesitantly "liberal"—liberal so belatedly as to be conservative in effect. The triad of *ribā*, *mirāth*, and *zakāh* (the canonical prohibition of usury, prescription of inheritance, and poor rate) is adduced in economic questions; veiling of women may, perhaps, be modified,

4. See, for example, Haqqani, *op. cit.*, pp. 268 ff.

5. See, for example, Jones, *Woman in Islam*, p. 58.

but not abandoned ; modern Turkey and Iran, though exercising a legitimate right of *ijtihād*, have gone too far : joint-stock company shares are permitted, bonds forbidden ; etc. These schools, essentially orthodox, have felt the pressure of modern conditions sufficiently to make some adjustment. But they have no positive programme, beyond the dogged conservation of the values that they have already understood. The Nadwat al-'Ulamā' shows something of the influence of its former principal, Shiblī.⁶ It gives students mild courses in English, modern history, politics, in addition to the traditional subjects ; and there is a somewhat rationalist air. However, a true liberal position has by no means been achieved ; either here or, virtually,⁷ anywhere else in the theological world of Indian Islam.

Politically, one section of the Farangī Maḥall has given its support to the Muslim League. The Nadwah has been vaguely Indian-nationalist. Twenty-five years ago, these schools produced several prominent Khilāfatists ; for example, Mawlawī 'Abd al-Bari. But in general, both schools have evinced their adjustment, however slight, to the present order by a policy of "keeping out of politics".

Most of the Muslim clergy of India, however, have not reached that point. The majority of them have been intensely and actively interested in politics, being enthusiastic Indian nationalists. They have formed no part of the British-imposed system, and consequently have had no reason to be anything but resolutely anti-British. We have elsewhere noted that most of them gave wholehearted and important support to the Khilāfat movement after the last war. Since that time there has been some falling off : as we have just said, there is a certain amount of political inactivity ; and some theologians, especially of the Bareilly group, have owned allegiance to the Muslim League. Another section, principally in the Punjab, was attached to the Ahrār party. Until very recently, however, most of the cleric class, and especially the large Deoband group, actively supported the Congress.

6. See above, p. 43.

7. See reference 2 above.

To organise the theologians' Indian nationalism, the *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā*, or *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā' i Hind* ("Association of Indian Muslim Clergy") was founded in Khilāfatist days. It has been an important and vigorous nationalist organisation, which could always be counted on to stir up, to sustain, and to give direction to the Muslim rural masses' anti-Britishness. It has lent itself to preaching and fostering Hindu-Muslim unity. It has been, of course, a thorn in the flesh of the Muslim League. In January 1940 its Working Committee endorsed the Congress attitude to the Second World War, and resolved to support the *satyagraha* campaign. Several of its leaders were imprisoned. In 1942 the *Jam'iyah's* support went, not very clearly, to Rajagopalacharya's policy of a Pakistan-conceding Congress nationalism⁸; in 1945 it elaborated this by envisaging a voluntary federation of independent provinces.⁹

The leadership of the *Jam'iyah* is drawn chiefly from the personnel of the seminary at Deoband. For example, the present president of the *Jam'iyah* is the principal of Deoband, Mawlāwī Sayyid Husayn Ahmad Madanī.

Naturally the rank-and-file members of the organisation, however nationalist, are as ignorant and backward, as neurotically opposed to change, as are unenlightened agrarian religionists all over the world (for instance, the old Russian village clergy). And even the leaders of this politically progressive movement are socially and intellectually intransigent. In answer to questions put to them by the present writer, a group of their prominent executives¹⁰ deplored modern Iran and Turkey for having gone too far, as in using the Turkish language in the call to prayer.

8. See above, p. 328, at reference 52.

9. "In our opinion a federation of the independent provinces of India is necessary and useful" but "the centre will have only those powers which the provinces will unanimously agree to hand over to it" : resolution of the Working Committee, 2 February 1945 (*People's War*, Bombay, 25 February 1945).

10. What follows is based on the answers to questions submitted by the present writer in a personal interview (1941) with Mawlāwī Kifāyat Allāh and two or three other, less prominent, members of the executive of the *Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā*, and Mawlānā Sulaymān Nadwī, supposedly one of India's most enlightened theologians.

Further, they deplored not only Mashriqī ("he believes not in the spiritual benefits of religion, but in its material benefits") and Iqbal ("his intentions were good : like the classic Muslim philosophers, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā,¹¹ etc., who grafted Greek philosophy on Islam, he wished to interpret the religion for the modern Western-educated youth. But he succeeded ill, for he went astray from pure Islam. However, he is to be thanked for bringing many moderns back into the fold ; and one could not expect more than he gave, for after all he was only a poet and philosopher"). They hesitated even over the far from radical Egyptian reformer, Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh ("a great theologian, great reformer. His principal contribution was to answer European objections, and most of them he answered successfully. But at times he departed from the ways of the ancients, and that he should not have done"). They conceived of sin as "that which pricks one's conscience ; or any action, thought, or intention that transgresses the (fixed) law of God". This indicates that their socially uncreative minds still move in an ancient milieu ; divine legislation implying a static order and conscience—the upholder of a priorly accepted morality—being seldom alert to new types of sin born only to-day. On being asked whether, apart from atheism, they considered the social system of the U.S.S.R. better or worse than that of modern Egypt, they admitted not knowing enough of these things to say.

In general, the Muslim theologians of India have been politically progressive, socially conservative.

A Note on the Aḥmadiyah Movement

The most important fact about the Aḥmadiyah Movement in Indian Islam is that the Aḥmadiyah Movement (though important in itself) is not important in Indian Islam. It has become important in the West, partly because of its extensive and able missionary enterprise, and partly because Christian missionaries in India have devoted much attention to it and to reporting its

11. Ibn Sīnā : known to the West for many centuries as Avicenna, the latter being a Latin corruption of his name.

activities. A great deal has already been written describing the movement, and we, therefore, need only make a few observations on its sociological significance.

The Ahmadiyah Movement arose towards the end of the nineteenth century, amidst the turmoil of the downfall of the old Islamic society and the infiltration of the new culture, with its new attitudes, its Christian missionary onslaught, and the new Aligarh Islam. It arose as a protest against Christianity and the success of Christian proselytisation; a protest also against Sir Sayyid Ahmad's rationalism and westernisation; and at the same time as a protest against the decadence of the prevailing Islam. It combined a purifying spirit of orthodox reform, a tinge of the new liberalism, a mystic irrationalism, and the authoritarianism of a new revelation. It appealed, therefore, to a group who were somewhat affected by the new conditions, but did not wish to make the complete break of becoming Christians, and were not sufficiently affected by those conditions to rely upon their own new position and to take responsibility themselves for Islamic modernism. The Ahmadiyah supplied such persons with a reform of the more obvious superstitions and corruptions; with a little liberalism; with an emotional security against Christianity; and underlying all, the authoritarianism of an accepted dogmatic infallibility, plus the enthusiasm and support of a small and self-conscious group.

The "prophet" of the movement was the pious Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad (1839-1908), born in a minor land-owning family in Qadian, a small town in the Punjab. As a youth he developed into a rapt religious recluse, given to hearing voices. He felt acutely the degradation into which Islam had fallen; and as he pondered religious questions he felt more and more called to purify Islam. He became widely known for his piety; and *presently for his theological teachings; he was accepted by many, including orthodox religious, as a great Muslim reformer. Suddenly, in 1889, his popularity gave place to extreme denunciation, when he announced that he had received a revelation authorising him to receive men's allegiance as the promised Messiah and Imām Mahdī; that is, Jesus returned to earth and*

the apocalyptic saviour who Muslim tradition has held will appear at the last day. The general Muslim community, and particularly the divines, outraged by this blasphemy, attacked him relentlessly. He persisted in his claims, undaunted, and gradually in succeeding years augmented them; and a small but growing group of disciples acknowledged his prophethood and adopted the new Islam. Despite intense persecution, the community grew, in numbers and in faith.

As the movement developed within the developing historical process, a time came when the liberal element had advanced sufficiently that it could and must dispense with the other, supporting, elements, which it had outgrown. The liberalism and the mystic authoritarianism consequently disentangled themselves, and the movement split. One section, comprising the middle-class members, set up its headquarters in a city (Lahore), and chose for leader an intellectual, slightly nationalist,¹² English-educated lawyer, one Muḥammad 'Alī. This group (incomparably the smaller now) has grown increasingly liberal, and has approached nearer and nearer to ordinary liberal Islam. It belittles its connection with Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, whose prophethood in a literal sense it explicitly repudiates; and it has been gradually obliterating the distinction between itself and the general middle-class Muslim community. That community also has begun to forget that distinction, and to look upon the Lahore Aḥmadiyah as simply an energetic and worthy Muslim missionary society. This Lahore section has, in fact, played a large part in the dissemination of Islamic liberal ideas. It has been politically passive.

The other section of the movement, when the split came, stayed in the village (Qadian), and chose for leader a man whose claim was his descent from the "Messiah" Aḥmad. It still has a smattering of liberalism in its ideas, and a sprinkling of middle-class followers in its membership. But the general atmosphere is traditional. For instance, the movement strictly enforces *pardah* and encourages polygamy, and has an ascetic morality that dis-

12. The Cawnpore mosque incident had somewhat incited Muḥammad 'Alī, while the other group remained unflinchingly "non-political".

approves of cinemas. On modern social questions, the group has little opinion ; mostly, it is not conscious of them. The problems of to-day's world which it cannot ignore, because they press on even this small community, it does not bother about on a large scale ; because on a small scale it solves them. For instance, instead of pondering world unemployment or class antagonisms, it sees to it that all its own members have jobs, and collects the canonical Muslim poor rate from its rich for its poor. Thus Ahmadi's come nearer to living the good life than do most of their neighbours; while their ideas on the subject are a century out of date. In fact, intellectually the movement is modern only in the sense of being recent. It is conservative, but it is not advanced enough to be termed reactionary. (We must note that its propaganda in Europe and America omits much of the backwardness which is evident at home, and includes a larger share of liberal ideology.) There is nothing in the Qadian Ahmadiyah that is not in orthodox Islam, except : its novelty, and the consequent enthusiasm ; its authoritarianism, with a *khalifah* who can relieve his followers of the moral responsibility of deciding even modern questions ; and finally, and most important, its cohesion—the fellowship and solidarity of a small and active community.

The community is certainly active, and it flourishes as the green bay tree. It has an exceedingly strong and closely-knit organisation. It meets annually in a large gathering. It imposes large taxes on its members. It has its own schools ; even its own courts, for all disputes between members which the Government of India itself does not insist upon trying ; etc. It claims 100% male literacy, 75% female (in *pardah* schools). If half a village somewhere is Ahmadi, that half is apt to be cleaner than the other half. There is an extreme corporate enthusiasm : the *Qadiyanis* devote themselves cheerfully to the service of their community, and feel that that community also is serving and supporting them. And they feel that they are taking part in a glorious creative task. Qadian, the headquarters of the movement, once a village, is now a thriving town undergoing a minor capitalist "boom". Landowners and others with private incomes,

ard and retired professional men, have moved to Qadian to live ; other enterprising members have come there to set up businesses, which have prospered. The organisation itself owns and operates industries in Qadian, as well as encouraging its well-to-do members to do likewise ; so that there is also a growing demand for labour. Further, it owns land in Sind, to which it sends its needy peasant members. It tries, with fair success, to find jobs for its unemployed ; and runs a poor house in Qadian for its unemployables.

The *Qādiyānīs*, then, differ from the modern Muslims in that they have a positive and concrete programme, and are busy carrying it into effect. In addition to admiring the first age of Islam, they can feel that they are in actual fact working to reproduce it. They have an enterprise before them which demands their energies, satisfies their needs, and awakens their enthusiasm. In spite of their antiquated social theories, they are forward-looking in a chronological sense : they can see the good old days being resuscitated before their eyes in Qadian. Further, they are ardently missionary. The material counterpart of this ideal is, as we have seen, the industrialisation of their small, cohesive, and fairly wealthy community, undergoing a private phase of capitalist expansion.

Politically, the Qadian Ahmadiyah has been rigidly "non-partisan"; it insists upon supporting whatever government is in power, providing it is allowed freedom to preach. Economically, it is very decidedly in support of the rights of private property ; and its avowed policy is to preach acquiescence in the *status quo*.

From time to time a quarrel flares up between the Muslims and the Ahmadiyah. The Movement is disliked ; primarily because of its exclusiveness : its members refuse to pray in a non-Ahmadī mosque, to attend a non-Ahmadī funeral, to take part in non-Ahmadī political aspirations. The counterpart of their internal cohesion and extreme self consciousness as a community is their deliberately cutting themselves off from the general Indian or Muslim community and its problems. It is this social aloofness rather than their theology (which is no more heretical

than the respected Āghā Khān's) that has occasioned the bitter antagonism between the Muslims and themselves.

Generally, however, the Muslims of India are becoming less conscious of the Aḥmadīyah Movement. They who once would kill it in ruthless furor now almost ignore it; especially as they have the Hindu community as a more absorbing antagonist. As we said at the beginning, the Aḥmadīyah is not very important in Indian Islam. We are content to leave undecided the question of whether or not it is part of Islam, whether or not Aḥmadīs should be called Muslims. Theoretically, the question is of no significance: it is purely a matter of terminology. From the practical point of view, the question is in fact undecided; it is not yet known whether or not in a crisis the Aḥmadīs would act with the general Muslim community—not even whether that community itself would act concertedly.

The Shī'ah

From the beginning Islam was a political as well as a religious community; of which fact one result is that political movements took religious form and hence in some cases gained an irrelevant permanence. The first body of dissenters in Muslim history formed a party (*shī'ah*) devoted to the Prophet's son-in-law 'Alī, protesting against the political *status quo*. For centuries discontented groups within Islam joined this opposition party and expressed their disaffection through it. Gradually it developed theologies and rituals of its own, and the Shī'ah became a permanent section of Islam—a time-honoured heresy over against the majority of orthodox (Sunnī) Muslims.

In India approximately one out of every thirteen Muslims is a Shī'ī.¹³ Between him and his Sunnī fellow-Muslims there are theoretical and ritual distinctions; of which the former are to-day

13. The Census of 1931 did not enumerate the Shī'ah separately. The statement in the text is based on the figures of Ferrar in Gibb (ed.), *Whither Islam?*, p. 183. Ferrar was for his other statistics using the 1921 Census, but its enumeration of the Shī'ah was admittedly inaccurate (see *Census of India*, 1921, vol. I, part I, p. 120).

relevant to no practical issues. The consciousness of difference, however, particularly as expressed in and stimulated by ritual (which always serves to express and to strengthen community consciousness), has been liable to being used, and has been used, to create a Shī'ah communalism ; and Sunni-Shī'i riots occur of great intensity. This is simply another manifestation of communalism in general, which we have already discussed. It is not religiously significant, except in so far as it shows that communal friction is not merely a result of basic Hindu-Muslim differences, but would flourish in India under present conditions even if all the inhabitants adhered to a single faith.

Organisationally, therefore, the Shī'ah is to some extent a distinct group, even for modern affairs. There is an All-India Shī'ah Conference : a non-political organisation that publishes a newspaper, and attends to orphanages, questions of religious endowments, and the like. There are modern Shī'ah schools and a college. Politically, some Shī'i individuals are members of the Muslim League, though the League has no separate Shī'ah section ; the only important Shī'ah political body was for a time mildly pro-Congress ; latterly it has been inactive.¹⁴

Religiously, on the other hand, Shī'ah separateness is traditional only. We have not given the Shī'ah group separate treatment in our study of the changes wrought in Islam by modern social processes, because there is nothing in the differences between Sunnī and Shī'i fundamentally relevant to those processes. The two groups diverge over what answers are to be given to questions which to-day do not arise.

We content ourselves, therefore, with observing that as far as modern religious development is concerned, the Shī'ah has shown precisely the same trends as have the Muslims generally ; only, as a group, it has developed more slowly. Distinctively Shī'ah publications contain the same sort of material as any other, but many years later. The Shī'ah has a liberalism, but it is less liberal. For instance, lives of Muḥammad retain rather more of the miraculous ; the challenge of modern science is felt, but less keenly ; etc.

14. See above, p. 272.

Incidentally, it is sometimes the life of 'Alī, rather than of Muḥammad, that is presented anew in liberal terms.

The reason for the belated development of the Shī'ah as a group is simple. The really advanced individuals among them have been advanced enough and broadminded enough to take their places in the development, whether progressive or reactionary, not of the Shī'ah as a group but of Islam in general. Some of the greatest leaders of Islamic modernism have been Shī'ī in the technical sense : Amīr 'Alī, Sayyidayn, and others. Jinnāh, also, is a Shī'ī, and many of the League's least dispensable figures ; e.g. the Rājahs of Mahmudabad and Pirpur. But these men have functioned not *qua* Shī'ī but *qua* Muslim. In so far as a Shī'ī is Shī'ah-community conscious, he is *ipso facto* less advanced.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

<i>religion</i>	<i>liberal</i>	<i>feudal</i>
<i>Muslim</i>	<i>conservative</i>	<i>bourgeois</i>
<i>Islām</i>	<i>progressive</i>	<i>socialist</i>
	<i>reactionary</i>	
<i>orthopraxy</i>	<i>communist</i>	<i>upper class</i>
<i>amelism</i>		<i>middle class</i>

Religious Terms

A scientific study of religion waits upon many things ; of which one is a clear definition of its terms. In this book, the following words have been used with the following meanings :

religion : that aspect of a person's life, or of his society's life, which that person regards as religion

Muslim : any person who calls himself a Muslim.

Islam : the religion of the Muslims.

The aim must be, as in all the sciences, to employ concepts which are operationally definable. Unless words can be chosen with meanings on which everyone can at once agree, no matter what may be his religious views, there is little hope for progress in understanding.

It has long been a classic problem to discover some definition of "religion" which will satisfy divergent parties in a discussion, so that they can agree at least on what it is that they are discussing. The present writer readily admits that he has no final solution for this crucial problem. But the definition suggested above is offered as a tentative approach to a solution. Its principal defect seems to be that, as it stands, it is valid only in the English language in which it is given. Without much elaboration, also, it could be translated into as many other languages as have words undisputably equivalent to the English word "religion". But farther than that it is not adequate. However, it is felt that, although not of universal application, it will prove fairly

serviceable for the purposes in hand.

The definition of a "Muslim" suggested above will, it is hoped, avoid preliminary theological dispute and anchor the discussion to objective history.

The definition of "Islam" is more revolutionary than it sounds. For instance, it does not prejudge the question of whether Islam is always identical. In fact, especially in an individualist society, one man's religion is hardly likely to be the replica of another man's. More broadly, as one group faces one set of circumstances and problems, and another group faces another set, differing perhaps radically in time, place, and social status, it is not unnatural and surprising that one "Islam," the religion of the Muslims in the one case, should be different from another "Islam," the religion of the other Muslims in the other case. The same thing applies, of course, to Christianity, chastity, and communism. It would, in fact, be the most elementary of observations, did it not run counter to the prejudices of almost all religious men.

The following words have been introduced in this book, on the grounds that they serve a useful purpose :

orthopraxy : As "orthodoxy" means the officially recognised and established beliefs of a religion ; so *orthopraxy* has been used here to denote its officially recognised and established practices. Similarly *orthoprax* is a fairly obvious and useful supplement to "orthodox". (These terms were first used, apparently, by one Lynch in 1852, though not in this objective sense.)

amelist : The word "atheist" has long been used to refer to a person who believes that there is no God. The word "agnostic" was proposed by T. H. Huxley to refer to a person who does not know whether there is a God, and believes that man cannot know. We are proposing the word "*amelist*" (from *ā* and μέλω; cf. ἀμελής) for a person who does not care whether there is a God. Similarly, "atheism," "agnosticism," "*amelism*".

Social Terms

Religious discussion is often vitiated because those taking part use words to which each gives a dogmatic meaning peculiar to himself or to his sect, with the result that each hardly knows what the others are talking about. In political and social matters, those taking part sometimes use words so vague and generalised as to have almost no meaning at all, with the result that each hardly knows what he himself is talking about. The following explanations are here given as a small contribution to clearing up this situation ; and in the belief that every serious writer on religious and/or social matters has a duty to make clear what he has in mind. The reader may not agree with the arguments that a writer puts forward, but at the least he should be able to understand them.

liberal (noun) : one who adheres to, or advocates the ideas of, *liberalism*, an intellectual movement characteristic of the successful bourgeoisie ; particularly the ideals and values of the middle class in England in the latter part of the nineteenth century and until the First World War.

(adjective) ; pertaining to liberalism.

conservative (noun) : one who wishes, and thinks it is possible, to preserve his society substantially as it is and has been, deprecating all important social change.

(adjective) : tending to preserve society as it is and has been, and to militate against important social change.

progressive (noun) ; one who is in active sympathy with the change of his society from its actual form to its next due form in the process of ameliorative evolution.

(adjective) : in harmony with or tending to promote such a change.

reactionary (noun) : one who has recognised that his society is changing or is likely to change from its actual form to its next stage, and who *reacts against* that change. In order to avoid social progress, the reactionary not only opposes it, but actively seeks to reconstruct a previous social form. The conservative works to perpetuate the present order ; the reactionary recognises that the present order is about

to be (or ought to be) superseded, and works so that instead of moving forward to a new form society shall move back to an earlier one. The conservative aims at preserving the past, the reactionary at reconstructing it.

Since it is in fact impossible to go backwards in history, the reactionary in fact may be an innovator. But the society, actually new, which he constructs does not mark *progress* beyond the previous form, in an evaluative sense, but retrogression.

(adjective) : in harmony with or tending to promote such a change.

communist (noun) : a member of one of the Communist Parties of the world, affiliated until recently with the Communist (Third) International.

(adjective) : pertaining to *communism*, the theory and practice of the Communist Parties.

The traditional antithesis between "liberal" and "conservative" is an historical accident. When liberalism was arising, the liberals were progressive. When liberalism is declining, the liberals are conservative. When it has disappeared, liberals trying to reconstruct it are reactionary.

"Liberalism" has another, profounder, meaning, referring to a part of the liberal movement, as defined above, which is permanently valid : the objective valuation of freedom, particularly in the individual human spirit. We have tried to avoid confusion, by hardly using the word in this sense in this book; for liberalism in this timeless sense has hardly taken root in Indian Islam.

An evaluative judgement is involved in the definitions given for "progressive" and "reactionary," when these terms are applied to the present time and an historical judgement is not yet possible. Clearly these definitions have been put forward by someone who believes that there is in history a basic process of ameliorative evolution ; and that it is possible for man to say broadly whether a major development is essentially in harmony with that process or runs counter to it. It is also true, and hardly less clear, that the present writer believes that socialism is the

next due social form in that process ; and that fascism is reactionary.

Once these judgements have been explicitly recognised, the definitions given above are not invalidated even for those persons who disagree with the judgements. Such persons need merely bear in mind that where "progressive" has been used with application to the contemporary scene, it refers to progress in the direction along which socialism lies ; and "reactionary" refers to movement in an opposite direction.

feudal : pertaining to a society, or to the dominant culture or class of a society, which has been predominantly agricultural, and in which the chief form of wealth has been revenue from land, and the chief power has been in the hands of a class who do not work the land but derive income from those who do. Specifically in Muslim India, "feudal" has been used here to refer to that form of society which has obtained from the first Muslim invasions (and before) until displaced by the bourgeois society introduced by British imperialism in the nineteenth century

bourgeois : pertaining to a society, or to the dominant culture or class of a society, which is predominantly capitalist, in which the chief form of wealth is revenue from commerce and industry, and power is chiefly in the hands of a class who do not work the commerce and industry but derive income (profits) from those who do. Specifically, "bourgeois" has been used to refer to the predominant culture (and its middle class) of Europe, from the effective rise of capitalism with the Renaissance and Reformation ; and in India, to the Westernised culture (and its class) introduced with and by British industrial imperialism.

socialist : pertaining to a society in which industry, agriculture, etc., are carried on in a planned and co-operative manner in the interests of all those who carry them on ; in which the only form of wealth is in "consumption" goods, and in which power is democratically in the hands of all the members of the society. Full socialist societies are a matter of the future, so that the definition of this word

cannot be made decisively empirical. But the U.S.S.R. may be given as an illustration of one society in which the basis for socialism has already been laid, and which has been moving in the direction of socialism.

Some have objected to the use of the word "feudalism" for Indian conditions, on the grounds that the characteristic land-tenure system of feudal Europe did not obtain in India. Admittedly the word has associations from European history which must be modified before it can be used also for Indian; or some other word might be used. The present writer has retained it because he has no other word to proffer.

upper class : in a feudal society, the ruling class. In a bourgeois society (specifically, modern India), the landowning class (not including those who both own and work their land).

middle class : in a feudal society, the commercial and clerical class. It was this class which expanded and rose to great wealth and power with the rise of capitalism. In a bourgeois society, therefore, the middle class is the dominant class. It includes all those involved in the economy of capitalism who own property, and especially those who derive income from their ownership of property.

Over the concept "middle class" much confusion has arisen, which still remains to be dissipated. The bourgeois class was originally called "middle" class because it was, in the feudal society in which it arose, midway between the upper class and the lower class. As history has proceeded, however, this class has risen to the top of the social system, with the old upper class as now an appendage (though in India, the old upper class is more important and more distinct than it is in free bourgeois countries). Meanwhile a new class has developed midway between the lower classes and the bourgeois "middle class": a new class of the professions and salaried positions. This new class is also being called "middle class," for obvious reasons. Yet the distinction between it and the class of men who derive their income not from salaries but from capital investment is a distinction which it is often important to keep in mind. It is to be hoped that a new and precise terminology will be introduced by

social writers to take these developments into account. Meanwhile, in the present book the term "middle class" or "bourgeois" includes all these groups ; and when more precision has been required, the very wealthy investment-owning class has been called the "*haute bourgeoisie*" or "capitalist class". "Upper middle class," "central middle class," and "petty bourgeoisie" or "lower middle class," refer to distinctions within the whole bourgeois middle class based on a criterion of wealth rather than of function. Thus, "upper middle class" refers to that group whose income is from a capitalist source and is high ; "central middle class" is used when such income is moderate; and "lower middle class" or "petty bourgeoisie" when it is small.

INDEX

A

'Abbāsī, 'Abbāsī civilisation, 5, 41, 44, 125
 'Abd al-Bārī, 365
 'Abd al-Ghaffār Khān, 255 ff., 278
 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Lahore editor), 183, 336 n.
 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Sultān of Turkey, 20, 233
 'Abd al-Karīm, 94
 'Abd al-Allah Āthim, Sayyid, 48 n.
 'Abd Allah, Sayyid Muhammad, 12 n., 15 n., 41 n.
 'Abd Allah, Shaykh Muḥammad, 276
 'Abd al-Laṭīf, Nawwāb, 7 f.
 'Abd al-Laṭīf, Sayyid, 234 n., 323
 'Abd al-Majīd, *Khalifah* of Turkey, 245, 246, 247
 'Abd al-Majīd Khān, Professor, 109 n.
 'Abd al-Majīd, Khwājah, 282 n.
 'Abd al-Majīd, Shaykh, 329 n.
 'Abd al-Qādir, Sir, 100 n.
 'Abd al-Qayyūm Anṣārī, *see* Anṣārī
 'Abd al-Wahīd, Khwājah, 81 n., 82 n., 174 n.
 'Abduh, Shaykh Muḥammad, 367
 Abraham, 119
 Abū Ḥanīfah, 43
 Abul Ḥāshim, 334 n., 339
 Abul Kalām, *see* Āzād
 Abyssinia, 47, 134
 Adam, 121
 al-Afghānī, Jamāl al-Dīn, 233, 254, 288
 Afghanistan, 22, 170, 242 f., 307
 Africa, 225

Age of Consent Bill, 203
 Āghā Khān, 28, 159, 248, 297, 298, 300, 372
 agnostic, agnosticism, 7, 56, 93, 148, 151, 219, 274
Ahimsa, 320; *see also* non-violence
 Ahl-i-Ḥadīth, 191
 Aḥmad Ḥusayn, Sir Amīn Jang, 36, 59
 Aḥmad, Khān A., 308 n., 377
 Aḥmadiyab, Aḥmadi(s), 147, 160, 189, 368-72; Lahore, 61, 369
 Ahrār, 142, 148, 258, 270-4, 278, 328, 364, 373
 Ajmal Khān, Ḥikīm, 247, 253
 Akbar 'Alī, Shaykh, 121 n.
 Akbar (Mughal emperor), 29, 101
 Akbar (satirist), 234
 algebra, 65
 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq, 35
 'Alī (son of Abū Tālib), 372, 374
 Aligarh, 12, 21, 28, 41, 46 f., 150, 151, 181, 200; scheme of Pakistan, 323; school of thought in modern Islam, Aligarh movement, 5, 26-48, 49, 52, 56, 59, 77, 80, 98, 141, 202, 367
Aligarh Institute Gazette, 20
 Aligarh University, *see* Muslim University
 Allah, 70, 72, 105, 120, 130; *see also* God
 Allah Bakhsh, 278, 282 n., 337
 Allahabad, 239
 Alṭāf Ḥusayn, *see* Ḥālī
 Ambedkar, B.R., 350 n
 amelism, amelism, 46, 61, 93, 142, 148, 219; defined, 376

- America, 68, 82, 93, 103, 213, 224, 361, 370; South, 54
 Amery, Leopold S., 251 n.
 Amīr 'Alī, 5, 22, 51-7, 60, 61, 69, 83, 85, 114, 173, 298, 373
 Amos, 137
 Amritsar, 34, 237
 Andhra, 226
 Andrew, C.F., 25 n.
 angels, 40, 61
 Anglo-Indians, 188 n.
 Animists, 188 n.
 Ansārī, 'Abd al-Qayyūm, 275 n.
 Anṣārī, M.A., 235, 347, 253, 258
 anti-Hindu feeling, *see under* Communalism
 anti-Semitism, *see* Jews
Apology for the New Light, 29
 Arab(s), 27, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 78, 86, 139, 189, 248, 266, 288; civilisation, 5, 54, 65, 102, 137, *see also* 'Abbāsī civilisation, etc.
 Arabia, Arab (adj.), 1, 52, 69, 72, 76, 82, 88, 119, 137, 138, 169, 171, 173, 179, 234, 245, 247, 253, 264, 266, 314, 336
 Arabic language, 16 n., 33, 42, 63, 65, 68, 111, 173, 254, 288
 Aristotle, 155, 364
 Aryans, Aryanism, 174, 187, 213
 Arya Samaj, 203
 Assam, 303, 337, 339, 347 ff.
 astronomy, 65
 atheism, atheist(s), 73, 80, 93, 120, 141, 146, 148, 158, 163, 167, 173, 174, 204, 257, 307, 376
 Austin, John, 35
 Avicenna, 368 n.
 Awrangzeb Khān, Saīdār, 339
 Awrangzeb (Mughal emperor), 101
 Āzād, Abul Kalām, 149, 234, 238, 244, 247, 254, 273, 328, 363 n.
 Azad Muslim Board, 280, 328
 Azad Muslim Conference, 279 f.
 Azamgarh, 44, 67
 Azhar, 254, 288, 363
- B
- Babbitt, 220
 Bacon, Roger, 68
 Baghdad, 15, 18, 39, 41, 65, 204
 Bahādur Yār Jang (Muhammad Bahādur Khān), 183 n., 306 n.
 Bakht Jamāl, 339
 Bakunin, Michael, 121
 Baldwin, Stanley, 293
Bil-i Jibril, 122
 Baluchistan, 278, 307 ff.
Bande Mataram, 317 f.
 Banū Umayyah, Umayyid empire, 131, 137 f.
 banya, 214, 228
 Barakat Allah, 35
 Bareilly, 362 f., 365
 "Basic National Education," 142 f.
 Basrah, 15, 65
 Beg, 'Abd Allah Anwar, 95 n., 116 n., 161 n.
 Bengal, 6, 25, 94, 192, 195, 203, 209, 211, 229, 232, 258, 277, 298, 303, 311, 314, 321, 334, 336, 338, 347 f., 354 n.
 Bergson, Henri, 157
 Besant, Annie, 298
 Bhājiwālā, 45 n.
 Bharat Bank, 332 n.
 Bible, 11, 17
 Birla industries, 228
 Bohr, Neils, 163
 Bombay, 19, 25, 193, 195, 201, 209, 239, 240, 298, 357
 Bombay Plan, 227
 Bos, Subhash Chandra, 261 f.
 Brahmo Samaj, 204
 Brest-Litovsk, 108
 Briggs, F.S., 243 n.
 Buddhism, Buddhists, 56, 188 n.
 Bukhārī, 'Atā' Allah Shāh, 273
 Burma, 324 n.

C

Cairo, 65, 219, 247, 254, 289, 364
 Calcutta, 8, 19, 21, 30, 192, 195, 201,
 234, 239, 300, 314, 331 n.
 Calcutta University, 94
 Caliph, *see* "Khalīfah," and 17 n.
 Calvinism, 16 n
 Cambridge, 14, 117, 287, 308
 Canada, 331 n.
 Canon Law, *see* Law, religious
 Carlyle, 73, 102
 Cash, W. Wilson, 75 n.
 caste, 91, 190, 221, 320
 Cawnpore, 45, 235
 Central Asia, 52, 307
 Central Provinces, 318
 Chakravarti, 286 n., 292 n.
 Chamberlain, Neville, 293, 321
 Chauri Chaura, 205
 Chelmsford, Lord, 217 n.
 chemistry, 65, 152
 Chhatārī, Nawwāb of, 311 n.
 Chiliasm, 243 : cf. Millennialism, 292
 China, 71
 Chirāgh 'Alī, 26, 56
 chivalry, 85, 87
 cholera, 120, 140
 Christ, 75, 83, 95 ; *see also* Jesus
 Christendom, 53, 55, 61, 67, 69
 Christianity, 5, 7, 11, 14, 16, 31, 37,
 54, 58, 59, 69, 75, 82, 87, 93, 94,
 101, 103, 105, 107, 125, 132, 148,
 315, 361, 368, 376
 Christian(s), 11, 21, 28, 37, 48 n.,
 55, 57, 65, 66, 67, 69, 109, 140, 146,
 147, 162, 173, 188, 224, 258 ; mis-
 sionaries, 14, 26, 34, 38, 47, 53, 61,
 75, 81, 368
 Church, Christian, and State, 28, 55,
 124
 cinema, 102, 290, 370
 Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-
 2), 206, 250, 257, 265, 270, 291,
 300, 319 ; individual satyagraha

(1940-1), 255, 262, 273, 319, 366
 clergy, Muslim, *see* Theologues
 Coatman, J., 308 n.
 Cocanada, 245, 248
 Colvin, Sir Auckland, 10 n., 200 n.
 Communal Award (1932), 207, 258
 Communalism, *Part I*, 6, 21 ff., 50
 f., 64, 100, 111, 127, 147, 151, 161,
 170, 173, 183 ; *Part II*, 187-236
 and *passim* ; *Part III*, 371 f., de-
 fined, 187
 Communism, Communist(s), Com-
 munist Party, 103, 108, 110, 127,
 158, 162, 181, 256, 261, 262 n.,
 268, 274, 282, 292, 302, 322, 330,
 332, 334, 336, 357, 358, 376 ; defin-
 ed, 378
 Complaint ("Shikwah"), 234
 Comrade (Calcutta, Delhi), 235
 Confederacy of India, 324
 Congress, Indian National, *Part I*,
 16, 21, 24, 25, 30, 64, 149 f., 151,
 156, 158, 167, 168 ; *Part II*, *passim* ;
Part III, 363, 365, 374 ; -League
 Co-operation (1940's), 223, 231,
 281, 296, 330 f., 335, 340-9, 354 ;
 -League Pact (Lucknow, 1916), 64,
 206, 237, 299, 330, Socialist Party,
 255, 262

Constantine, 129
 Constantinople, 59
 Cordoba, 65, 66, 136
 Cow Protection Society, 203
 Cripps Mission (1942), 307, 337, 342
 Crusade(s), 68, 140
 Cumming, Sir John, 209 n.
 Curzon, Lord, 203
 Czechoslovakia, 213

D

Dacca, 297
 Dalton Plan, 152
 Damascus, 129, 131, 137
 Dār, Bashir Ahmad, 170 n.

- Dār al-Muṣannifīn ("Shibli Academy"), Azamgarh, 44, 67
 Davenport, 102
 Dayananda, 203
 "Day of Deliverance" (Muslim League, 1939), 310, 317
 Day of Judgement 63, 122
 Definition of Terms, 375 ff.
 Deism, 78 ff.
 Delhi, 5, 7, 38, 40, 110, 150, 151, 168, 196, 235, 246, 253, 254, 278, 294
 Delhi College, 39
 democracy, 36, 53, 56, 68, 128 f., 137, 156, 169, 171, 222, 230, 233, 293, 302, 314, 352, 179
 Deoband, 252, 255, 362, 363, 366
 Depression, World Economic (1929 ff.), 93, 101, 166, 250, 293
 Desai, Mahadev, 255 n.
 Devanagiri script, 310
 Dialectics, 99, 103, 113
 Dhakā' (Zakā') Allah, 39
 Dhākir (Zākir) Ahmad, 152
 dictatorship, dictator(s) 119, 134, 169
 Dihlawī, Shāh Walī Allah, *see* Shāh Walī Allah
Divide et impera, 193
 Divines, Muslim, *see* Theologues
 divorce, 28
 Draper, John William, 102 f.
 Dualism, 36, 123, 124 ff., 132, 140, 145
 Durrānī, F.K. Khān, 69 n., 101 n., 138 f.
 Dutt, R. Palme, 194 n., 207 n., 208 n., 261 n., 333 n.

E

- Eastern Roman Empire, 58
 East India Company, 3
 Egypt, Egyptian(s), 9, 43, 60, 105, 197, 227, 316, 362, 367

- Einstein, Albert, 163
 Elections (Provincial, 1937), 167, 208, 229, 250, 259, 260, 301 f., 306, 309. (Central, 1946), 331 n.
 Ellenborough, Lord, 193 n.
 Elphinstone, Mo Stuart, 194 n.
 English language and literature, 7, 8, 14, 16, 23, 26, 34, 37, 43, 60, 82, 102, 111, 118, 152, 153, 177, 197, 200, 235, 239, 254, 263, 297, 310, 318, 364, 375
 Erode, 239
Essays on the Life of Mohammed, 15

F

- Faḍl al-Haqq, 277, 303, 311 n., 337
 al-Fārābī, 367
Farā'id, 191
 Farangī Mahall, Lucknow, 362, 365
 Farquhar, J.N., 14 n.
 Farrukhī, 'Abd al-Laṭīf, 342 n.
 Fārūqī, Muhammad Muḥsin, 288
 Fascism, 15, 102, 108, 128, 141, 155, 157, 166, 170, 171, 173, 177, 181, 228, 255, 264, 292, 293, 301, 311, 314, 318, 322, 325, 326, 378
 fasting, 56
 Fatalism, Fate, Destiny, etc., 5, 115, 120, 131, 179
 Fāṭimah, 165
 Ferrar, 372 n.
 "Fourteen Points" (Muslim Demands, 1930), 206
 French, 332
 Freud, Sigmund, 181
 Frontier Province, *see* North-West Frontier Province
 future life, *see* immortality

G

- Gallup Poll, 256
 Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand, 63, 64, 109, 136, 151, 206, 220, 237,

- 239, 240, 244, 246, 247, 255, 261, 262, 264 n., 273, 319, 331, 347-50 ; -Jinnāh Talks (1944), 281, 331, 344, 347, 356
- Garratt, G L., 210
- Gaya, 245
- Gazdar, M.H., 322 n.
- Geneva, 253
- geography, 64, 67
- Germany, German, German(s), 62, 64, 117, 156, 168, 171, 173, 174, 187, 213, 274, 286, 301, 312, 317, 322, 333
- Ghadr movement (1914 f.), 236, 363
- Ghazipur, 210
- Ghaznawī, Mawlānā Dāwūd, 273 n.
- Ghosh, D.C., 226 n.
- Ghulām Ahmad, Mirzā, 26, 368, 369
- Ghulām al-Sayyidāy, *see* Sayyidāy
- Gibb, H.A.R., 372 n.
- Gibbon, Edward, 102
- God, 17, 31, 70, 74, 75, 79, 93, 94, 98, 100, 108, 115, 119-26, 132, 133, 135, 145, 146, 158, 162, 165, 170, 172, 175, 177, 178 n., 179, 197, 219, 234, 266, 267, 268, 289, 291, 316, 322, 367, 376 ; *see also* Allah
- Graham, G F.I., 10 n., 20, 194 n., 200 n.
- Grant, Sir J.P., 8 n.
- Greek language and culture, 65, 68, 124, 367
- Gurkha(s), 263
- H**
- Hāli, Aitāf Husayn, 37, 41, 44
- al-Hallāj, 276
- Hamdard (Delhi), 235
- Hanafi school of law, 43, 363
- Haqqānī, Abū Muḥammad, 363 n.
- Hasan Imām, Sayyid, 297 n.
- Hastings's Calcutta Madrasah, 8
- Heaven, 77 n., 64, 95, 100, 121, 125, 165, 314 ; *see also under* immor-
- talities
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 165
- Heisenberg, W., 163
- Hell, 64, 76, 132, 165 ; *see also under* immortality
- Hellenism, 42, 120
- Hidāyat Allāh, Sir Ghulām Husayn, 340
- Hijaz, 169
- Hijrah, Hijrat movement (1920), 242, 244, 288
- al-Hilal (Calcutta), 239
- Hindi, 318
- Hindu(s), *Part I*, 7, 21, 22, 25, 50, 81, 109, 111, 141, 147, 148, 151, 152, 160, 162, 184 ; *Part II*, *passim* ; *Part III*, 372
- Hindu Mahasabha, and Hind Sabha, *see* Mahasabha
- Hindu-Muslim antagonism, *see under* Communalism
- Hindu-Muslim group co-operation, 63, 116, 205, 231, 254, 272, 277, 281, 334, 357, 358 ; *see also* Congress-League Pact, Congress-League Co-operation
- Hindu-Muslim unity, 23, 64, 151, 201, 206, 218, 231, 237, 251, 253, 269, 366
- Hinduism, 17, 57, 58, 84, 91, 101, 136, 152, 159, 189, 190, 191, 192, 203, 220, 221, 228, 275, 320
- Hindustani language, 64 ; *see also* Hindi and Urdu
- Hitler, Adolf, 107, 156, 170, 187, 286, 289
- Hoare, Sir Samuel, 207
- Holy War, *see under* war
- "Home Rule" movement (1916), 237, 298
- Hudaybiyah, 108
- Humāyūn Kabir, 272 n., 277 n., 329 n.

Hunter, W.W., 3 n., 192 n., 194, 199
 Ḥusayn ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj, *see*
 Ḥallāj
 Huxley, T.H., 376
 Hyderabad (Deccan), 111, 160, 326

I

‘ibādāt, 183
 Iberia, 67
 Ibn Hishām, 54 n.
 Ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj, Ḥusayn, *see*
 al-Ḥallāj
 Ibn Sīnā, 368
 Ibn Surūd, 247
 Idealism (philosophic), 34, 57, 119,
 126, 133, 157
 ijmā’, 36
 ijtihād, 51, 159, 161, 176, 363, 364
 ‘Ilm al-Dīn, 85 n.
 ‘Imād al-Dīn, 48 n.
 immortality, and belief in another
 world, 55, 69, 94, 100, 125, 132,
 139, 178, 246, 255, 314
 Indian Association (1875), 201
 Indian Mussalmans, 194
 Indian National Congress, *see* Con-
 gress
 Indian Ocean, 196 n.
 Indian United Patriotic Association,
 20, 24
 Industrial Revolution (England), 4
 infidel, 4, 8, 120, 126, 146, 192, 242,
 320, 322, 326; *see also* atheist
 Inqilāb (Lahore), 255
 interest on capital, Islam and, 32,
 36, 48, 104, 105, 108, 228, 362
 intolerance, *see under* tolerance
 Iqbāl, Sir Muḥammad, 6, 41, 54,
 113-48, 155-74, 176, 210, 234,
 268, 286, 307, 308 n., 315, 367
 Iran, 23, 45, 105, 119, 364-6
 Iraq, 59, 105, 246, 316
 ‘Irāqī, 155
 Irwin, Lord, 118

al-‘Iṣlāḥ (Ichhra), 287
 Islam, *passim*, defined, 375, 376
 Islamica (Berlin), 64
 Islamic Community, University, *see*
 Jāmi‘ah Millīyah Islāmīyah
 Islamic Congress, Jerusalem (1930),
 248
 Islamic Regeneration, 64
 Islamiyah College, Peshawar, 288
 Islamiyat Club, Aligarh, 184
 Italy, 169

J

Ja‘frī, S.N.A., 72 n., 82 n., 84 n.
 Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, *see*
 Afghānī
 Jāmi‘ah (Delhi) 153
 Jāmi‘ah Millīyah Islāmīyah, 47,
 50-4, 240
 Jamil al-Dīn Aḥmad, 318 n., 321
 n., 322 n., 333 n., 377, 378
 Jamīyat al-‘Ulamā’, 238, 245, 279,
 289, 329, 366
 Jammu and Kashmir, *see under*
 Kashmir
 Japan, Japanese, 262, 264 f., 295,
 306, 318
 Jawahar Lal Nehru, *see under*
 Nehru
 Jayn(s), 188 n.
 Jayrāzbbhā‘ī, Qāsim ‘Alī, 106 n.
 Jerusalem, 248
 Jesus, 58, 75, 76, 368: *see also* Christ
 Jew(s), 65, 187, 188 n., 213, 248,
 317, 318
 Jhang, 217 n.
 Jihād, 8, 13, 127, 140; *see also* War,
 Holy
 Jinn, 40
 Jinnāh, Muḥammad ‘Alī, 182, 255,
 263 n., 275, 277, 296, 298, 300-50,
 373; -Gandhi Talks (1944), *see*
 Gandhi-Jinnāh Talks

Jones, V.R., and L. Bevan, 91 n.,
364 n.
Justinian, 58

K

kāfir, 146, 178 n.
Kaiser, 128, 132
Kamāl, 'Abbās 'Alī, 342 n.
Kamāl, Muṣṭafā, 128, 169, 245, 247
Kant, Immanuel, 163
Karachi, 267
Karāmat 'Alī, 8 n.
Karīmabbā'ī Ibrāhīm, Sir, 343 n.
Karnatak, 227
Kashmir, 211, 230, 272, 276, 307,
329, 330
Kashmir Muslim Conference, 276;
see also Kashmir National Con-
ference
Kashmir National Conference, 277,
329
Khāksār, 181, 279, 283-95, 296 n.
Khalīfah, 28, 35, 57 n., 66, 246;
for particular khalīfahs *see by*
name. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, etc.; of
the Ahmadiyyah movement, 370
Khalīq al-Zamān, Chawdhri, 245 n.,
247, 258
Khilāfah 20, 35, 238, 239, 242, 243,
246, 248, 256, 259
khalāfat al-rāshidah, 6, 137
Khalīfat Conference, Cairo (1926),
247, 289
Khalīfat Conference(s) and Com-
mittee, India, 238 ff., 289, 299, 319
Khalīfat Manifesto (1920), 238
Khalīfat Movement, Khalīfatists,
50 n., 65, 83, 92, 96, 129, 150, 151,
203, 233-51, 254, 256, 271, 281, 288,
299, 365, 366
Khoja, 247
Khudā Baksh, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, 30 ff.,
62-5, 114

Khudā'ī Khidmatgār(s), 217, 265-70,
277, 328, 339
Kichlū, Sayf al-Dīn, 253
Kidwai, *see* Qidwā'ī
Kifāyat Allah, Mawlawī, 366 n.
"Kingdom of God," 275
Kitchin, Donald K., 162
Kobat, 247
Kraemer, H., 61 n., 228 n.
Krishak Praja Party, 256, 277, 329
Krishna, K.B., 20 n., 199 n., 276 n.,
kufir 124; *see also* atheism
Kufah, 65

L

Labour Party (Britain), 251
Lahore, 38, 83, 117, 118, 139, 170,
176, 196, 220, 232, 235, 255, 292,
294 f., 299, 303, 312, 349, 369
Lahore Ahmadiyyah, 61, 368 f.
Laina, 57
Lārī, Z.H., 342 n.
Latin language, 368 n.
Law, religious or canon, Sharī'ah,
4, 15 f., 31, 34, 43, 48, 54 f., 76 f.,
78, 83, 85, 101, 105 f., 120, 159 f.,
170, 171, 175, 178, 219, 245, 318,
322, 326, 362 ff., 367; natural, 70,
79 f., 100, 160, 170, 179, 288;
state, 33, 34 f., 66, 68, 80, 99, 105,
138, 179, 249
Lead, Kindly Light, 315
Lenin, Valdimir, 132, 268
Lewis, John, 16 n.
Lex talionis, 266
Liberal Party (India), 325
liberalism, liberal(s), 49-111, *and*
passim; defined, 377, 378
life after death, *see* immortality
Linlithgow, Lord, 307
Liyāqat 'Alī Khān, 345 n., 352 n.
Liyāqat Hayāt Khān, Sir, 332
Lloyd, George (Lord), 57
London, 11, 72, 117, 156, 193, 217,
219

Lothian, Lord, 118
 Lovett, Sir Verney, 205 n., 298 n.
Loyal Muhammadans of India, 10
 Lucknow, 19, 24, 43, 44, 98, 142,
 196, 255, 272, 292, 298, 301, 362,
 364
 Lucknow Pact (Congress-League,
 1916), 216, 237, 299
 Luddite Movement, 192
 Lynch, 376

M

Macmurray, John, 126
 Madani, Husayn Ahmad, 217 n.,
 252, 316
 Madinah, 17, 42, 73, 137
 Madras, 19, 20, 25, 118, 195, 214,
 219, 295, 319
 Mahasabha, Hindu, 206, 222, 223 n.,
 226, 307, 331, 335 n., 344, 356 f.
Mahatma Gandhi (article by Khudā
 Bakhsh), 63
Mahdī, 368; cf. Messiah, 291
Mahdī 'Alī, Muḥsin al-Mulk Sayyid,
 28, 43
 Mahmudabad, Rājah of, 374
 Muḥmūd al-Ḥasan, 151, 254
 Majlis, Muslim, *see* Muslim Majlis
 Makkah, 17, 73, 108, 171, 254, 266
 Malabar, 243
 malaria, 140
 Mamdot, Nawwāb of, 306 n.
Manifesto (Punjab Muslim League),
 337, 340, 356
 Manshardt, Clifford, 210
Manṣūris, 276
 Marhattas, 198
 Marx, Karl, 116, 131, 158, 256, 268
 Mary (mother of Jesus), 94
 Mashriqī, 'Ināyat Allāh Khān, 285
 n., 287 ff., 289 n., 367
 Materialism, Materialist(s), 18 n.,
 56, 125, 130, 143, 152, 220, 224
 mathematics, 39, 66, 152, 155, 287,
 288
 Mawdūdī, Sayyid Abul A'lā, 79, 80
 n., 176 ff., 177 n., 362 n.
 Mawlawī(s), *see* Theologues
 Mazdak, 57
 Maẓhar al-Ḥaqq, 297 n.
 McPherson, Sir Hugh, 209 n.
 Mecca, *see* Makkah
 medicine, 66, 105, 120, 162, 194
 Meherally, Yūsuf, 34 f., 235 n.
 255 n.
 Meier, Bruno, 16 n.
 Messiah, 291, 368
 Mexican, 54
 Middle East, 67
 Mihr Chand, 273 n.
 Millennialism, 292; cf. Chiliasm, 243
 Minto, Lord, 297
 Minto, Mary, Countess of, 297 n.
 Minto-Morley Reforms, 204, 297
 miracles, the miraculous and super-
 natural, 10, 39, 42 f., 52, 73 f., 75,
 125, 292, 377
Mir'āj, 17
Mirāth, 105, 108, 364
 missionaries, Christian, 14, 34, 38,
 47 f., 53, 60, 75, 84, 368, Muslim,
 61, 307, 369, 371
 Monotheism, unity of God, 30, 36,
 100, 170, 284
 Monism, 124, 140
 Montagu, Edwin, 217 n.
 Montford Reforms, 239
 Moplah(s), 206, 209, 244 f.
 Moscow, 89
 Mu'āwiyah, 137
 Mughal empire and civilisation, 9,
 29, 67, 87, 101, 193, 196, 362
 Muḥammad (the Prophet), 4, 6, 12,
 15, 27, 31, 41, 42, 44, 51 f., 54, 56,
 58, 59, 62, 68, 69, 71-8, 82, 84,
 88, 95, 96, 102, 107, 108, 114, 122,
 135, 137 f., 139, 140, 160, 166 n.,

- 171, 172, 178, 179, 189, 253, 265,
266, 285, 292, 352, 363, 374
Muhammad VI, Sultān of Turkey,
242, 245, 246
Muhammad 'Alī (Lahore Ahmadiyah
leader), 369
Muhammad Amin, 106 n.
Muhammad Asad (Leopold Weiss),
98, 99 n., 174 n., 175
Muhammad Ibrāhīm, Hāfiz, 281 n.
Muhammad Mujīb, 153 n.
Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Col-
lege, Aligarh, 13, 14, 15 n., 20, 28,
42, 45, 111, 200; *see also* Muslim
University
Muhammadan Defence Association,
22 f.
Muhammadan Educational Confer-
ence, 13, 28, 94
Muhammadan Literary Society
(Calcutta), 74 f.
Muhsin al-Mulk, 28, 43
Muir, Sir William, 11, 54 n.
Mukharji, Girija, 25 n., 198 n.
Mukharji, Panchananddas, 198 n.
Mukharji, Syama Prasad, 337 n.
Mulla(s), *see* Theologues
Mus'min (theological), 36, 146;
(political), 275 f.
Mumtāz Mahall, 87
Munich, 117
Musaddas, 38
Muslim League, *Part I*, 29, 47, 94,
118, 149, 172, 181 f., 183; *Part II*,
passim; *Part III*, 363, 365, 366, 373
Muslim Majlis, 280 ff., 330
Muslim Students' Federation, 181,
319 n.
Muslim University, Aligarh, 45 f.,
111, 150, 180, 240, 316 n., 317, 322;
see also Muhammadan Anglo-
Oriental College
Mussolini, 116, 134, 169
Mustafā Khān, 29 n., 30
Mu'tazili(s), 18, 42
Mutiny (1857), 4, 7, 9, 10 n., 20, 22,
28, 39, 41, 193, 194, 199, 200, 254,
277, 369
Mymensingh, 209
mysticism, mystic(s), -72, 86, 117,
119, 124, 135, 164, 170, 171, 181,
203, 292, 368
- N
- Nadhīr Ahmad, 39, 42, 105
Nādir Shāh, 22
Nadwat al-'Ulamā', Lucknow, 43 f.,
362, 365
Nadwī, Muẓaffar al-Dīn, 114 n.
Nadwī, Sulaymān, 44 n., 86 n.,
366 n.
Nafīs al-Dīn Ahmad, 67 n., 68 n., 363
Napoleonic Code of Law, 35 f.
National Conference (1885), 201
National Defence Council, 305, 311,
343 n.
National Muhammadan Association,
22, 51 n.
National Socialism, National Social-
ist, Nazi, 108, 171, 264, 322; *see
also* Germany, Fascism, Hitler
Nationalism (general and Western),
117, 140, 162, 170, 187, 216, 226 f.,
230 f., 233, 297, 314
Nationalism (Arab), 140, 266
Nationalism (Indian), *Part I*, 19,
47, 50, 57, 63, 117, 149 f., 154, 155
f., 166, 167, 180; *Part II*, *passim*;
Part III, 363, 366, 368
Nationalism (Islamic, Indo-Muslim),
117, 140, 149, 167, 170, 183, 187,
215, 226, 260, 274, 280, 283-358
Nationalism (Kashmiri), 230, 329
Nationalism (Pathān), 230, 266 ff.,
329
Nationalism (Sindhī), 230, 329
Nationalist Muslim (Party), 149 f.,
206, 257, 281 n.

Naturalism as religion, 18, 48 n.,
78 ff., 108, 141, 176, 178
Nazi, *see* Nationalism, Socialism
Nāzim al-Dīn, Sir, 339
Near East, 43, 67, 213, 237, 254, 274
Nehru, Jawahar Lal, 156 n., 159,
220, 242 n., 255, 322
Nehru Report (1928); 206 f., 248,
257, 300, 306, 319
"New Light," 29
New World of Islam, 64
New York, 89
Nicholson, Reynold A., 124 n.
Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, 157
Nigār (Lucknow), 98, 141
Niyāz, 141
Nizām of Hyderabad, 36, 111, 159
Non-Co-operation Movement (1919
ff.), 64, 92, 150, 151, 239 ff., 243,
250, 254, 266, 288, 299, 319
"Non-Violence," 109 f., 237, 239,
244, 263, 267, 273, 320; *see also*
Pacifism
"No-Rent" campaign (1930), 265
North-West Frontier Province, 230,
242 f., 265-70, 272, 278, 307, 228
n., 337, 338, 339, 341 f.; *see also*
Pathan(s)
Nu'mān, Muḥammad, 315 n., 342 n.
Nu'mānī, 44; *see* Shibli
Nūr Aḥmad, 286
Nūr Husayn, 286
Nūr Jahān, 87

O

Oliver, Lord, 216
Omphaloskepsis, 164
Orientalist(s), Orientalist studies,
30, 59, 62, 64, 67, 288
Orthodox Church, 132

Orthopraxy, 81, 160, 175, 291; de-
fined, 376
Osmaniya University, *see* "Uth-
māniyah University
Osteomalaria, 91
Other World, *see under* immortali-
ty
Ottoman Empire, *see* Turkey
Oxford, 14, 118, 163

P

Pacifism, pacifist(s), 255, 263, 279;
see also "Non-Violence"
Pā'ī Muḥammad Yūsuf Aḥmad, 100
n., 110, 126 n.
Pakistan, separate Muslim state, 6,
47, 147, 149, 180 f., 183, 184, 223,
226, 227 ff., 270, 273, 276, 278,
281, 303, 304, 307, 358, 364
Pakistan map, 346
Palestine, 249
Pan-Islam, 20, 44, 50, 233, 274
Panjab, University of, 287
Pardab, seclusion of women, 13, 32,
43, 81, 84 ff., 91, 165, 170, 177,
182, 260, 369
Parsi(s), 21, 50, 188 n., 195, 214, 241
Partition of Bengal (1905), 203, 209
Parulekar, N. B., 193
Pathān(s), 203, 265-9, 307, 329, 338
Patna, 383
Payām-i-Mashriq, 132
Persia, *see* Iran
Persian, language and culture, 24,
42, 44, 64, 111, 117, 119, 124, 162,
171, 254, 307; script, 310
Peshawar, 288
physics, 288
Pichā'ī, A.A. Allāh, 342 n.
Pickthall, Muḥammad Marmaduke,
85, 109 n.

- Pirpur, Rājah of, 318, 3/4; Report, 214, 315
- plague, 140
- Platonism, 126, 155
- plebiscite, 281, 345, 347, 351
- Poet of the East*, 169
- Poland, 213
- Polanyi, Karl, 16 n.
- polygamy, 18, 32, 69, 83 ff., 114, 247, 282, 369
- Polygamy*, 83
- Pompeii, 67
- Portuguese, 196, n.
- post-millennialism, 292
- Prashad, Rajindra, 279 n., 307, 313, 314 n., 324 n., 342 n.
- pre-millennialism, 292
- Prabodh Chandra, 181 n.
- Progressive Muslim League, 277
- Project Method in Education, 145, 151 f.
- prophethood, 97, 178, 368, 369
- Proposed Reforms*, 27
- prostitutes, prostitution, 82, 87
- Protestantism, 360
- psychoanalysis, 87
- Punjab, 45, 72, 117, 142, 148, 170, 192, 198, 236, 237, 258, 263, 270, 262, 278, 286, 293, 299, 304, 308, 310, 311, 334, 338, 339, 341, 346, 355 ff., 360, 365, 368
- "Punjabi" (pseudonym), 317 n., 324
- Puritanism (European), 87

Q

- Qadian, 29, 368, 369, 370, 371
- Qādiri, Muhammad Afzal Husayn, 324
- Qadiyāni, *see* Ahmadiyah movement
- Qā'id-i-*Azam*, 314
- Qarashī, 'Abd al-Majīd, 361

- Qidwā'i, Shaykh M.H., 72, 83, 84, 108 n.
- "Quit India" movement (1942), 267
- Qur'ān, 12, 15, 17, 27 f., 30, 40, 54, 62, 70 f., 76, 78, 84, 96, 105, 108, 129, 131, 140, 141, 150, 166, 170, 175, 179, 241, 254, 266, 267, 284, 288, 316; quoted, 71, 105, 123, 242, 266
- Qurayshī, I H., 314 n.

R

- Radical Democratic Party, 330
- Rai Bareilly, 192
- Rajagopalacharya, C., 328, 330, n., 344, 353, 366
- Rajput, 214
- Ramakrishna, 203
- Rangarh, 255
- Ringilā Rasūl* incident, 62 n.
- rationalism, *see* reason
- reason, in religion, rationalism, 13, 15 n., 18, 19, 34, 42 f., 43, 53, 62, 92, 98, 141, 172, 180, 322, 363, 364, 368
- Red Crescent Mission to Turkey (1912), 235
- "Red Shirts," 268, 570; *see* Khudā'i Khidmatgār
- Reformation (Europe), 37, 379
- Religious Polity of Islam*, 34
- Renaissance (Europe), 68, 379
- rent, 107
- Reuter, 322
- revelation, 18, 98, 141, 175, 178, 288, 368
- Ribā', *see* interest on capital
- Ridā', Rashid, 43, 362
- Robinson, James Harvey, 181
- Roman Empire, Eastern, 58

Rome, 193

Round Table Conference(s) (1930-2),
156, 207, 217, 300

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 153

Rowlatt Bills (1919), 237

Rowlatt Commission (1917 f.), 256

Roy, M. N., 330

Rumûr-i-Bekhudî, 132, 170

Russia, Tsarist, 230, *see also* Union
of Soviet Socialist Republics

S

Sa'd Allah, Sir Muhammad, 311 n.

Sâdiq Hasan, Shaykh, 342 n.

Sannaryat, 236

Sanskrit, 152

Santhanam, K., 352 n.

Sapru Conciliation Committee
(1945), 330

Saracenic civilisation, *see* Arab civilisation

Sarda Act, 249

Sarkar, S.C., 262 n., 277 n., 304 n.

Sarwar, Hâfiz Ghulam, 74 n.

Satan, 121

Satyagraha, 237, 263, 273; *see also*
Non-Co-operation and Civil Disobedience

Satyagraha Day (1919), 237

Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bareilly, 192

Sayyid, G.M., 329 n., 335 n., 340

Sayyidayn, Khwâjah Ghulam, 131
n., 142-8, 162 n., 183, 374

scheduled castes, 188

Schopenhauer, Arthur, 82

science, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11 n., 14, 17, 18
n., 34, 39, 46, 48, 53, 65, 68, 70, 76,
79, 92, 94, 96, 111, 115, 120, 130,
131, 134, 137, 141, 142, 145, 158,
168 f., 176, 179, 254, 255, 288, 360,
373

Scientific Society (Ghaziipur-Ali-
garh), 11 n., 21

script controversy, 15, 310

seclusion of women, *see* Pardah

Sen, Ela, 217 n.

"Sermon on the Mount" of Muham-
mad, 54

"Servants of God," 266; *see also*
Khudâ i Khidmatgâr

Seth, Hira Lal, 290 n.

Sevres, Treaty of, 238

Shafî, Sir Muhammad, 299

Shâh Chirâgh Mosque, Lahore, 176

Shâh Nawâz, Begum, 311 n.

Shâhjahân, 130

Sharar, 'Abd al-Halîm, 98

Shawkat 'Ali, 238, 247, 248, 278

Shî'ah, Sîfî, 58 n., 189, 247, 272,
276, 293, 372 f.

Shî'ah Conference, 373

Shî'ah Political Conference, 276, 279,
373 n.

Shibli Academy, Azamgarh, 64, 67

Shibli, Muhammad, 41 ff., 45 n., 49,
54, 234, 365

Shîrwânî, Tasadduq Ahmad Khân,
247

Sialkot, 166

Sicily, 234

Sikandar Hayât Khân, Sir, 303, 304,
n., 311

Sikh(s), 12 n., 82, 163, 188, 191, 192,
198, 241, 251, 252, 277, 285, 310,
333, 338, 351

Simla, 286; Conference (1945), 353,
356

Simon Commission (1927 f.), 299

sin, 99, 106, 120, 121, 124, 127, 197,
243, 367

Since Our Fall, 170

Sind, 230, 243, 278, 286, 303, 308, 320,
329, 334, 337, 339 f., 346 ff., 371

Sindhī, 'Ubayd Allah, 253
 Singapore, 262 n.
Sirah, 72
 Sīrat movement, 72, 361
Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, 159
 slavery, 13, 18, 27, 28, 48, 53, 69, 83, 96, 129, 140, 241, 267
 Smith, Bosworth, 102
 Smith, William Roy, 244 n.
 Socialism, Socialist(s), *passim*; defined, 379
 South America, 55
 Soviet Union, *see* Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
 Spain, 38, 67
Spectator (London), 12
Spirit of Islam (Amīr 'Alī), 51, 57 n., 60
Spirit of Islam (Khudā Bakhsh), 30
 Strachey, Sir John, 199
 Students' Federation, All-India, 181
 Subhan, John A., 285 n., 287 n., 322 n.
 Sublime Porte, 242
 Sudeten Germans, 213
 Suffragette movement (England), 91
 Sūfī, 72, 119, 124; *see also* mystic
 Suleri, Z. A., 228 n., 334 n.
 Sultān Ahmad, Sir, 305 n., 311 n.
 Sultān of Turkey, 29, 57 n., 242; *for particular Sultāns, see by name*, 'Abd al-Hamid, etc.
 Sunnī, 189, 272, 293, 372, 373
 supernatural, *see under* miracle
 Swiss Code of Law, 33 f.
 Switzerland, 331 n.
 Syria, 137, 245

T

Tadhkirah, 288
Tahdhīb al-Akhlaq, 12 ff., 26, 28, 38

Tanda Bago, 287
 Tando Muhammad Khan, 341 n.
taqlīd, 15, 61
Tarānah-i-Hindī, 117
Taskhir-i-Fīrat, 121
 Tata industries, 228
 Tā'thīr, Muhammad Dīn, 132 n.
Taller (London), 12
Tawhīd, 140; *see also* Monotheism
 Taxīlla, 67
 Tayyibjī, Badr al-Dīn, 25 n., 255
 theological academies (Muslim), 78, 151, 218, 252, 362 ff.; *see also particular academies*, Deoband, etc.
 Theologues, Muslim clergy, divines, etc., 8, 23, 37, 40, 62, 78, 83, 122, 127, 150, 177 f., 197, 234, 238, 240 f., 246, 247, 252, 268, 284, 288 f., 291, 292, 318, 326, 328, 360-8, 369; *see also Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā'*
 Thompson, Edward, 237 n.
Thoughts on the Present Situation, 30
 thumb-print system in the Qur'ān, 70
 Tiliak, B.G., 203, 298
 Tiwānah, Khidr Hayāt Khān, 339
 Toledo, 66
 tolerance and intolerance, in religion, 11, 46, 53, 57 f., 62, 66, 68, 73, 179, 180, 266, 322
 Toynbee, Arnold, 243 n.
 Tradition (*ḥadīth*), 15, 27, 62, 70, 71, 73, 123
 Translation Society (Ghazipur), 19n.
 transliteration, 16 n.
 trigonometry, 65
 Tripuri, 261
Trouble in the Balkans, 234
 Trustee Theory of Property, 108
 tuberculosis, 92, 99
 Tulū' al-Islām (association), 168

Tulā' al-Islām (periodical, Delhi),
169

Tulā' al-Islām (poem of Iqbal), 168
Turk (of Turkistan), 189

Turkey, Turk(s), 20, 28, 35, 45, 57,
105, 128, 129, 169, 176, 233, 249,
298, 316, 319 n., 365
Turkish language, 367

U

'Ubayd Allah Sindhī, 253

Uḥud, battle of, 292

'Ulamā', *see* Theologues

Umayyad empire, Banū Umayyad, 131,
137

Unionist Party (Punjab), 278, 293,
304, 337

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,
U.S.S.R., 35, 110, 132, 158, 243,
253, 264, 268, 322, 358, 367, 379

Unitarianism, 52

United Provinces, 45, 258, 272, 278,
286, 293

United States, *see* America

Unity Board (U.P.), 278

Unity Conference (1924), 206

Unity Conference (Jhang, 1942),
217 n.

Untouchables, 192; *see also* schedul-
ed castes

Upper India Muhammadan Defence
Association, 22 f.

Urdu Academy (of Jāmi'ah Milli-
yah Islāmiyah), 153

Urdu language and literature, 7, 10,
11, 12, 14, 17 n., 26, 38, 39, 40, 111
f., 117, 119, 152, 176, 200, 235, 242,
255, 288, 318, 362

U.S.S.R., *see* Union of Soviet Social-
ist Republics

'Uthamāniyah University, 111 n.,
116 n., 153, 323

Utopia, 133, 155, 165, 335

V

Vambéry, Arminius, 8 n.

Vega, 69

Vegetarianism, 320

vicegerency of God, 122, 135, 165

Vivekananda, 203

W

Wahhābī (Arabian), 2

Wahhābī (Indian), 2, 3, 8, 9, 41, 191
f., 199, 223, 363

Wailing Wall Commission (Pales-
tine), 248

Wājidi, Muḥammad Farīd, 43

Walī, Shaykh Miān Mīr, 130

Walī Allah, Shāh, 40, 253, 363

war, 33, 114, 143, 144; holy, 13, 127,
129, 140, 192, 267; Islam and ag-
gressive, 13, 18, 27, 32, 43, 53, 102,
129, 133; *see also* "Jihād"

War, Balkan (1912), 20, 45, 234, 245;
First World (1914 ff.), 34, 49, 58, 65,
72, 91, 92, 93, 97, 129, 233, 234,
236 ff., 245, 250, 257, 298, 303,
332, 366, 377; Second World (1939
ff.), 6, 72, 97, 101, 167, 172, 211,
213, 226, 252, 257, 262, 272, 283,
295, 305, 333 n., 336, 343 n., 366;
Italo-Abyssinian (1936), 134;
Italo-Turkish (1911), 234

Wardha, 152, 153

Watan Party (Baluchistan), 278

Wavell, Lord, 331, 357

Weiss, Leopold, *see* Muḥammad
Asad

Wellington, Duke of, 193 n.

Wilson, Samuel Graham, 15 n.

women, status of, 14, 18, 28, 32, 4

53, 57, 66, 70, 81, 93, 96, 103, 109,
114, 139, 141, 159, 165, 170, 171,
181, 182, 243, 248, 269, 364, 371

Y

"Young Turks" (1908), 233
Yūnus, Muḥammad, 268 n.
Yūsuf 'Alī, 340, 362
Yūsuf Mihr 'Alī, 255 n., 256

Z

Ẓafar al-Ḥasan, 324
Zafar 'Alī Khān, 44 n., 235
Zahāh, 105, 108, 364 ; cf. *poor-ra's*,
370
Zamindār (Lahore), 235
Zaidī, Sayyid M H., 81 n.
Zenith, 220
Zoroastrianism, 57 ; *see also* Parsi(s)

